From

Ralph Mortensen

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To

Melvin A. Kelland

The Best Man

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

AMERICAN LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

SERIES OF 1910–1911

RELIGION IN CHINA

UNIVERSISM: A KEY TO THE STUDY OF TAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM

BY

J. J. M. DE GROOT, Ph.D., LL.D.

Professor of Sinology in the University of Berlin

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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To

MY OLD

FATHER AND MOTHER

PREFACE

THE object of the writer of this book is to exhibit his view of the primitive and fundamental element of Chinese religion and ethics. That view is based on independent research into the ancient literature of China and into the actual state of her religion.

The evident necessity to study that primitive element from ancient Chinese books has compelled the author to quote a great number of passages from those books. Without using the building materials, he could not build. He has translated the passages independently from former translators, but with conscientious consultation of the opinions of native commentators. The source of every quotation is faithfully mentioned. Short notes about the sources can be found in the book by means of the Index, so that there is no need of describing or summarising them here.

In the conviction that his view on the fundamental element of Chinese religion and ethics is

correct, the writer confidently gives this book as a key to the study of Taoism and Confucianism. No such key has as yet been offered. In 1893 he afforded one for the study of Mahayāna Buddhism under the title of *Le Code du Mahayāna en Chine*. He cherishes the confident hope that the two works may encourage the serious study of a most important branch of science, which to this day remains altogether too much under the sway of superficial dilettantism, in Europe as well as in America.

In the Chinese terms the consonants are pronounced as in English, and the vowels as in German or Italian.

De Gr.

Leiden,
27 August, 1911.

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1910–1911—Prof. J. J. M. DeGroot—The Development of Religion in China.

1911–1912—Prof. Franz Cumont.†—Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans.

The lecturer for 1910–1911 was Prof. J. J. M. DeGroot. A native of Holland, Prof. DeGroot enrolled as a student in the University of Leyden. Subsequently he became interpreter for Chinese languages in Java and in Borneo. He was nearly six years in the East studying the Chinese people and their languages. In 1891, he returned to his alma mater as professor, an office which he held

* This course was not published by the Committee, but will form part of Prof. Jackson's volume on the Religion of Persia in the series of "Handbooks on the History of Religions," edited by Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr., and published by Messrs. Ginn & Company of Boston. Prof. Jastrow's volume is, therefore, the eighth in the series.

† Owing to special circumstances, Prof. Cumont's volume was published before that of Prof. DeGroot. It is, therefore, the ninth in the series and that of Prof. DeGroot the tenth.

till 1911. In January, 1912, he was appointed Professor of Sinology in the University of Berlin.

The lectures contained in this volume were delivered before the following institutions:

Johns Hopkins University, Lowell Institute, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, University of Chicago, Meadville Theological Seminary, Yale University, Columbia University, and Drexel Institute.

JOHN P. PETERS,
C. H. TOY,
Committee on Publication.

October, 1912.

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The Development of Religion in China

CHAPTER I

THE TAO OR ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE

IT is a matter of common knowledge that there are three religions in China, viz.: Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. There is, however, a saying in that country, *han san wei yih*, "it contains three (religions) and yet it is only one (religion)." Is it possible to determine what the one religion is, which the three are supposed to represent?

It might be suggested that the saying simply implies that the three religions have been amalgamated into a single one. But if this were the case,

the *three* religions would have ceased to exist, and yet their separate existence cannot be denied. Or the saying might mean that every Chinese professes the three religions at the same time. There may be some truth, even much truth, in this plurality of religions in every Chinaman's creed; yet it remains unexplained *why* three religions should form a single one in the minds or hearts of the people. A third explanation, namely, that the unity of the three religions simply means that China is a country of most remarkable and exemplary tolerance, is based on an error; the truth is that this supposed tolerance is, and ever was, a legend, as I have tried to prove with the help of original historical texts and imperial laws and decrees in a special work, entitled *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China.*[1]

It is evident that mere suggestions are futile and that study alone can solve the problem. The fact is, that the three religions are three branches, growing from a common stem, which has existed from pre-historic times; this stem is the religion of the Universe, its parts and phenomena. This

[1] Published by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Amsterdam, 1903–1904.

Universism, as I will henceforth call it, is the *one* religion of China. As these three religions are its three integrant parts, every Chinese can feel himself equally at home in each, without being offended or shocked by conflicting and mutually exclusive dogmatic principles.

In the age of Han, two centuries before and two after the birth of Christ, the ancient stem divided itself into two branches, Taoism and Confucianism, while, simultaneously, Buddhism was grafted upon it. Indeed Buddhism at that time found its way into China in an Universistic form, called Mahayāna, and could therefore live and thrive upon the ancient stem. In this way the three religions appear before us as three branches of one trunk; as three religions, yet one. It is a remarkable coincidence that this greatest moment in the development of religion in China was synchronous with the birth of Christ and Christianity.

Buddhism, being merely the engrafted branch, may be left aside for the present, in order that our attention may be confined in the first place to Taoism and Confucianism, the bifurcation of ancient Universism. This Universism was Taoism; the two terms are synonymous. In the Han

period it produced a branch, which, however, did not give birth to any new religious elements or doctrines. This was Confucianism, the State Religion, destined to become the pre-eminent branch, sapping and destroying, under the control of the principle of intolerance, the vitality of the Buddhist branch, and preventing Taoism from growing into a religion of paramount importance.

The Chinese Empire, one and undivided, was created in the third century before our era. At that time, the powerful Emperor Shi-hwang of the Ts'in dynasty, which had ruled in the north-west since the ninth century B.C., destroyed the congeries of states that, up to that time, had existed in the birthplace of higher East Asian culture, the home of Confucius and Mencius, and the dominion of earliest sovereigns and sages, of whom Chinese myths and fancies have never ceased to speak and dream. But the house of Ts'in did not last long enough to organise the enormous new empire, created by the greatest of its sons. It collapsed after a few years, giving place to the glorious dynasty of Han, which maintained itself and its throne till the third century of our era. The reign of this house signified the permanent triumph of Classic-

ism or Confucianism, that is to say of Universism or Taoism. In organising the young empire, its statesmen built up a political constitution, taking, naturally and systematically, for their guides the principles, rules, and precedents of the old time, embodied in the ancient literature, in so far as this was not irrecoverably lost in the flames which Shi-hwang in a frenzy of pride had kindled to devour it. With a view to the completion of their gigantic task of organisation, this classical literature was sought for, restored, amended, commented upon. Thus there arose a classical, ultra-conservative State constitution, which, handed down as an heirloom to all succeeding dynasties, exists to this day. The religious elements contained in the Classics were necessarily incorporated with that constitution, together with the political, since everything mentioned in the Classics was to be preserved and developed as a holy institution of the ancients; in other words, those religious elements became the State Religion. This religion, therefore, is now fully two thousand years old. The basic principle, Universism, is, of course, older, much older than the classical writings, by means of which it has been preserved. As is the

case with many origins, that of China's Universism is lost in the darkness of antiquity.

The inference is that the religious principles and elements which are contained in the Classics, and for this reason are those of Confucianism to this day, are the ancient principles of Universism or Taoism, and that the Classics are, accordingly, the bibles of both Confucianism and Taoism. We have now in the first place to see what these principles are, and what, accordingly, is the character and core of the ancient and present religion of East Asia.

Universism is Taoism. Indeed, its starting-point is the *Tao*, which means the Road or Way, that is to say, the Road or Way in which the Universe moves, its methods and its processes, its conduct and operation, the complex of phenomena regularly recurring in it, in short, the Order of the World, Nature, or Natural Order. It actually is in the main the annual rotation of the seasons producing the process of growth, or renovation and decay; it may accordingly be called Time, the creator and destroyer.

Man through obscure ages has mused on Nature's awful power, and realised his absolute

dependence on it. Thus the conviction has ripened in him that to exist and to live in a happy state, he should comport himself, as perfectly as possible, in accordance with the universe. Should his acts disagree with that almighty Tao, a conflict must necessarily ensue, in which he as the immensely weaker party must inevitably succumb. Such meditations have led him into the path of philosophy—to the study and discovery of the characteristics of the Tao, of the means of acquiring these for himself, and of framing his conduct upon them; in other words, Man, conceiving the Universe as an animated Universe, which imposed its will imperiously and irresistibly, tried to learn this will, to submit to it humbly, and to obey it implicitly.

It is evident that this was a catholic system, calculated to embrace the whole sphere of human life and action. It stands before us, in fact, as a system of discipline and ethics based upon observation, divination, and imitation of Nature, and giving birth to a vast compound of private, domestic, and social rules of conduct, extending even to political institutions and laws, everything in which was directed to this one aim: to attract Nature's beneficial influences to the people and its govern-

ment and to avert its detrimental influences. A principal sub-division of that system was the worship of the Universe, that is to say, the propitiation of a host of gods, which being components of the Universe in visible or invisible shape, manifest themselves in its ways and works.

The Chinese themselves, from a remote antiquity, have called the system the *Jen Tao*, or "Tao of Man," in contradistinction to the Tao of the Universe, which it pretends to copy. And this universal Tao is divided by them into two parts, namely the *T'ien Tao*, or "Tao of Heaven," and the *T'i Tao*, or "Tao of the Earth." It goes without saying (as the Chinese themselves hold) that the Tao of Heaven is paramount in power to the Tao of the Earth, as it is in fact through Heaven,—through its warmth and rains—that the annual process of creation is performed. Heaven, accordingly, is the highest god which the Chinese possess. There is, indeed, in the Chinese system no god beyond the Cosmos, no maker of it, no Yahweh, no Allah. Creation is simply the yearly renovation of Nature, the spontaneous work of Heaven and Earth, repeating itself in every revolution of the Tao.

The name Taoism, which we are wont to give to the system, is, as we see, correctly chosen, and there is no reason to banish it from our science of religions. In fact, the Chinese themselves employ the terms *Tao kiao*, "Doctrine of the Tao," and *Tao mun*, "School of the Tao."

Contemplation of the Universe and study of its laws did not, in China, develop into a correct science of Nature, dethroning the gods who were its parts and phenomena. Universism has outlived all ages, especially in the conservative classical form, which we know as Confucianism. I have stated that its pristine principles are contained in the Classics, which are the holy bibles of Confucianism and Taoism. The holiest of these books is the *Yih king*, esteemed holiest because it divulges the first principles of the system. Its third Appendix, entitled *Hi-ts'zĕ* or "Appended Explanations," the authorship of which many Chinese scholars and critics attribute to Confucius, describes the Universe as a living machine or organism, which it calls *Tâi-Kih* or "Supreme Apex," or "Most Ultimate." This produced the "two Regulating Powers" or *Liang I*, which are cosmic souls or breaths, called *Yang* and *Yin*. These souls re-

present the male and the female parts of the Universe, assimilated respectively with the fructifying heaven and the earth which it fructifies, as also with warmth and cold, and light and darkness. "There is," as the Appended Explanations state, "in the system of mutations [of Nature] the Most Ultimate which produced the two Regulating Powers, which produce the four shapes [or seasons]." It is these two powers which constitute the Tao, for the Appended Explanations add explicitly "that the universal Yin and the universal Yang are the Tao"; indeed the process of Nature or Universal Order is the annual mixture, in various degrees, of cold and warmth, by which the seasons are produced and the processes of birth and decay are carried out. These processes are called *yih*, "changes or mutations"; "the processes of birth and re-birth, or of production of life, are the *yih*," say the Appended Explanations. Hence the title of the *Yih king*, "holy Book of the Mutations." These mutations being the manifestation of the Tao, and thus actually the Tao itself, Chinese scholars frequently describe the Tao as "the revolving mutations of the *Yin* and *Yang*," or "the annual

revolution of changes produced by the *Yin* and *Yang*," or "the changes which the *Yin* and *Yang* produce."

Ancient and modern authors are wont to define the Tao of the Universe as "the way of the road of the *Yin* and *Yang*." The *Yin* is assimilated with the Earth, which is cold and dark, and the *Yang* with Heaven, which is warm and luminous; they are respectively the female and the male of the soul of the Cosmos, its Anima and its Animus.

I have said that the Tao of Man is a line of conduct, which pretends to be an imitation of the Tao of Heaven and Earth, calculated to make him happy. It is prescribed by his absolute dependence on the Universe for his birth and life. This dependence is emphasised by the classical dogma that Man borrows his own vital spirits from the dual soul of the Universe, and thus actually is a product of these powers, as also by the fact that his material body is shaped out of the same elements which constitute the Universe. Indeed in the *Li ki*, the most voluminous collection of classical books, we read, "Man is a product of the beneficial operation of Heaven and Earth, or of the copulation of the Yin and the Yang, and the union

of a *kwei* with a *shen;* he consists of the finest breath which the five elements contain."[1] Thus ancient philosophy described Man as a compound of a *kwei* and a *shen*, two souls respectively related, as the context of this passage suggests, with the *Yin*, or terrestrial matter, and with the *Yang*, or immaterial celestial substance.

In the same great classic, which has to the present day narrowly confined Chinese thought within the limits of its doctrines, we do not search in vain for more dogmatic teaching about the nature of Man's dual soul and its relation with the Universe. It states that,

> "Tsai Ngo said, 'I have heard the words *kwei* and *shen*, but I do not know their meaning'; and that Confucius thereupon said to him: 'The *khi* or *breath* is the full manifestation of the *shen*, and the *p'oh* is the full manifestation of the *kwei;* the union of the *kwei* with the *shen* is the highest of all doctrines. Living beings must all die, and the soul which must then return to earth is that which is called *kwei*. But while the bones and the flesh moulder in the ground

[1] The book called *Li yun*, III.

and imperceptibly become the earth of the fields, the *khi* or breath departs to move on high as a shining light'."[1]

This instructive paragraph is the fundamental dogma of Taoist and Confucianist psychology. It teaches that the universal *Yang* and *Yin* are divided into an indefinite number of souls or spirits, respectively called *shen* and *kwei;* the *shen* represent light, warmth, productivity, life, which are the special qualities of the *Yang;* and the *kwei* darkness, cold, sterility, death, which are the attributes of the *Yin*. The soul of Man, like that of any living being, consists of a *shen* and a *kwei* or *p'oh;* his birth is an infusion of these souls, his death is their departure, the *shen* returning to the *Yang* or Heaven, the *kwei* to the *Yin* or Earth. His body is, like Heaven and Earth, composed of the five elements. Accordingly, Man is an intrinsic part of the Universe, a microcosm, born spontaneously from and in the macrocosm. His *shen* is, of course, his principal soul, constituting his intelligence and life; his *kwei* represents his qualities of the opposite kind.

[1] The book called *Tsi i*, II.

This classical system of Universistic psychology, beside which no other ever arose in China, defines the Yang as a supreme, universal *shen*, living, creating, which divides itself into an infinite number of *shen* and deposits them in the various beings of the world; and the Yin as an universal *kwei*, likewise divisible into myriads of particles, each of which, in an individual, may form his other soul. Accordingly, creation is a continuous emanation or effusion of parts of the Yang and the Yin, and destruction of life is a re-absorption of such parts. This process is the principal and highest manifestation of the Tao. It is achieved by the particles themselves, the Tao doing its work spontaneously. Those particles, the *shen* and the *kwei*, are innumerable. The Universe is crowded with them in all its parts; they animate every being,—everything, even the things which are wont to be called dead objects. A *shen*, being a part of the Yang or the beatific half of the Universe, is considered to be in general a good spirit or a god; and a *kwei*, belonging to the Yin, is as a rule a spirit of evil, a spectre, devil or demon. As there is no power beyond the Tao, there is no good in Nature but that which comes from the *shen*,

no evil but that which the *kwei* cause or inflict. It is the *Yih king* which testifies to the prevalence of these conceptions in ancient China, and therefore has established to this hour their authority as holy dogmas of the highest order.

"The *shen* are omnipresent; it is they which perform the unfathomable work of the Yang and the Yin. These two vital breaths [of the Universe] create the beings; their peregrinating *hwun* (or *shen*) are the causes of the changes [in Nature], from which, accordingly, we may learn the actions and manners of the *kwei* and the *shen*."[1]

According to one of the classics, the omnipresence of the *shen* and the *kwei*, and their activity in the process of creation and production overawed Confucius not less than it must have overawed every thinker of his time.

"How bountiful," exclaimed he, "is the beatific work of the *kwei* and the *shen*! We look for them, but we do not see them; we listen for them, but do not hear them; they incor-

[1] *Hi-ts'zĕ*, I.

porate themselves in every being and everything, without exception. They cause all people under heaven to fast and purify themselves and to array themselves in full ceremonial dress, and then, when they thus offer their sacrifices, they, like an ocean, seem to be over their heads and to their left and right."[1]

With these dogmas before us, we may now say that the old groundwork of the Chinese system of religion is an Universistic Animism. The Universe being in all its parts crowded with *shen* and *kwei* the system is, moreover, polytheistic and polydemonistic. The gods are such *shen* as animate heaven, the sun and the moon, the stars, wind, rain, clouds, thunder, fire, the earth, seas, mountains, rivers, rocks, stones, animals, plants, objects of any kind; in particular also the gods are the *shen* of deceased men. And as to the demon-world, nowhere on the earth is it so populous as in China. *Kwei* swarm everywhere. No place exists where man is safe from them. They are especially dangerous during the night, when the power of the *yin* part of the Universe, to which

[1] *Chung yung*, 16.

demons belong, is strongest. They snatch the souls out of living men, so that these become ill or die. They strike or touch men, so that dangerous boils or tumours appear on their bodies. Ghosts of the ill-buried dead haunt dwellings with injurious effect, and are not laid until the dead are reburied decently. Hosts of demons not seldom set whole towns and countries in commotion, and utterly demoralise the people. Armies of spectral soldiers, on foot and horse, move through the sky, especially at night, kidnapping children, smiting people with disease and death, even compelling men to defend themselves with noise of gongs and drums, with bows, swords and spears, flaming torches, and fires. They steal the pigtails of inoffensive people. . . . Literature in China abounds with demon-tales—which are no stories in Chinese eyes, but undeniable facts.

Confucius himself divided the demons into three classes, living respectively in mountains and forests, in the water, and in the ground. The mountain-demons may by their mere presence cause drought and, as a consequence, the destruction of crops, hunger, famine—which means in China the death of thousands, nay millions; they have

harassed China like chronic plagues in all times and ages.

Water-demons, most of which are souls of drowned men, cunningly cause people to tumble into the water or to sink away in mud flats; or they paralyse swimmers. Demons which inhabit the ground are disturbed by people who dig in the ground or who move heavy objects, and they then take revenge by disturbing the embryo in the womb of woman

A very large contingent is contributed to the demon kingdom by animals. China has its were-wolves, but especially its tiger-demons, ravening in the shape of men. Foxes and vixens in particular, but also wolves, dogs, and snakes are notorious for insinuating themselves into human society for immoral purposes, disguised as charming, handsome youths or female beauties; and not seldom they devour the victims of their lust, and, at all events, make them ill, delirious, insane. Evil is regularly inflicted upon men by all sorts of animals, even by birds, fishes, and insects, especially after assuming human shape. Those endless changes of men into beasts and beasts into men, in order to play their tricks as devils, are the best

illustrations of the sway exerted upon the Chinese mind by the system of Universism, which teaches the animation of all beings, men and animals equally, by the same Yang and Yin that constitute the Order of the Universe. As a consequence of this same doctrine, trees, shrubs, herbs, and objects are believed to send out their souls, in order to inflict evil on men.

We thus see the Chinese people living in a world which is crowded on all sides with dangerous evil spirits. That belief is not banished to the domain of superstition or nursery tales. It is a corner-stone of China's Universistic religion, held to be as true as the existence of the Yin, as true, indeed, as the existence of Tao or Order of the World. As the demons act in that Order as distributers of evil (because they represent the Yin, or its cold and dark half), they exercise a dominant influence over human fate, as do, in like manner, the *shen*, the spirits or gods of the Yang, who are the distributers of blessing. But the Yang is as high above the Yin as Heaven (which is the Yang) is above the Earth. Heaven, therefore, is the chief *shen* or god, who rules and controls all evil spirits and their actions. And so Chinese theology has this

great dogma, that no demons harm man without the authorisation of Heaven, or at least without its silent consent. This dogma is eminently classical, being laid down in the *Shu king* and the *Yih king*. We there read, "It is Heaven's Tao to give felicity to the good, and to bring misfortune upon the bad;[1] the *kwei* harm the arrogant; the *shen* render the modest happy."[2]

Belief in the existence of the evil spirits is a main inducement to the worship and propitiation of Heaven, to the end that it may withhold its avenging *kwei*. All the *shen* or gods, being parts of the Yang, are the natural enemies of the *kwei*, because these are the constituents of the Yin; indeed, the Yang and the Yin are in perpetual conflict, manifested by alternation of day and night, summer and winter, heat and cold. The purpose of the worship and propitiation of the gods is to induce them to defend Man against the world of evil spirits, or, by descending and living among men, to drive those spirits away by their overawing presence. That cult in fact means invocation of happiness; but happiness simply

[1] *Shu king*, the book called *T'ang kao*.
[2] *Yih king*, the appendix called *T'wan*, I.

means absence of misfortune which the demons bring. Idolatry in China means the disarming of demons by means of the gods.

The belief in a world of devils, which are of high influence upon man, is in China's religion even more than a basis; it is a principal pillar in the building of morality.

The Tao or Order of the Universe, which is the yearly mutation of the Yang and the Yin, is perfectly just and impartial to all men, producing and protecting them all in the same manner. Heaven, the Yang itself, by means of the gods rewards the good, and by means of the demons punishes the bad, with perfect justice. There is, accordingly, in this world no felicity but for the good.

Already in the *Tso ch'wen*, a famous book ascribed to a disciple of Confucius, and therefore invested with dogmatic authority, we have clear illustrations of the belief in the infliction of punishments by spirits acting with the authorisation of Heaven. That book also teaches that spirits punish or bless whole kingdoms and peoples for the conduct of their rulers, making a nation thrive if its rulers are virtuous, or making it decline if they are wicked. Accounts of the distribution of re-

wards and punishments by spirits are scattered throughout the literature of all periods. Moralists have written collections of such accounts for the maintenance of public morality; and the diversity of such tales is infinite.

Numerous, on the other hand, are the tales of spirits which, in return for favours done them, reward their benefactors. Imperial commanders have been victorious through the help of hosts of spectres assisting their troops in battle. Tales of ghosts, rewarding those who bestowed care upon their unburied or ill-buried corporal remains, occur in literature in strikingly large numbers, tending to maintain and to promote a careful disposal of the dead as a branch of social benevolence, and even as a subject of imperial legislation. Especially people laying sacrilegious hands upon graves have always incurred the vengeance of the spectres of those buried therein. The belief in spirits and their punishments prevails throughout all classes to this day, kept alive by hundreds of tales handed down from the good old times.

The doctrine that spectres may at any moment interfere with man's felicity exercises a mighty influence for good upon morals. It enforces re-

spect for human life, and a charitable treatment of the infirm and the sick. Charity, clemency, and mildness are even extended to animals, for these too have souls which may work vengeance or bring reward. The firm belief in the retributive justice of spectres also deters man from grievous and provoking injustice, because wronged parties do not seldom convert themselves into wrathful ghosts by committing suicide.

Spiritual vengeance may manifest itself in a hundred ways. The spectre may enter the body of his enemy and make him, in a fit of mental derangement, confess his crime, so that earthly justice is able to lay its hands on him; or the ghost takes possession of his body to render him ill or mad; or it causes his death after long and painful suffering, maltreating his soul; or it drives him to suicide. The vengeance may come in the form of poverty, sickness or death upon the culprit's offspring; indeed, the most cruel punishment for any one is the ruin or extermination of his male issue, leaving nobody to support him in his old age, nobody to protect him after death from misery and hunger by caring for his corpse and his grave and by sacrificing to his soul.

As the highest ambition of every Chinese is his admission into the mandarin class, we find success at the world-famed examinations, which open access to official posts, placed foremost in the list of rewards which may be bestowed by grateful spectres. Numerous instances of spectres helping candidates to obtain their degrees occur in the books of the present and past. On the other hand, being "plucked" is often ascribed either to the fact that no grateful spectres interfered, or that some rancorous ghost prevented the candidate from producing a first-rate essay. There are always among the large host of candidates some who, while secluded in the examination cells, become ill, or deranged in mind, or die, or commit suicide in consequence of nervous excitement; but the Chinese generally ascribe such things to revengeful interference of spectres.

Humanity and benevolence, thus based on selfish fear of punishment and hope of reward, may have little ethical value in our eyes; yet their mere existence in a country where culture has not yet taught man to cultivate goodness for its own sake, may be greeted as a blessing. An ethical system built up on Demonism, that is to say, on a basis

which we condemn as unsubstantial and hollow, as mere untruth and superstition created by the darkest ignorance—claims the serious attention of the student of the human race and its culture. Certainly that system is more than a Sinological curiosity. Because of the twenty or more centuries during which it has existed, and because of its imposing background—the religion of the Universe—that strange ethical system is, I think, an important phenomenon in the history of the influence of religion on civilisation. Be this as it may, it cannot be denied that Chinese demonocracy, in spite of the falsity of its basis, has up to this hour done admirable service in East Asia in tempering man's bad instincts.

Speculation about the Tao of the Universe has been indulged in by many authors in China, even as early as her classical age. But these speculations have not moved much outside the circle of conceptions which I have sketched. The doctrine of the *Yih king*, according to which the Tao (or the Yang and Yin) has evolved from the *T'ai Kih*, or "Most Ultimate," which we may call Chaos (see p. 9), has been obediently received as dog-

matic, classical truth by all sages in all times. And as the Yang and Yin represent Heaven and Earth, it is not strange that prominent writers admit the organised Cosmos to have been formed by the Tao spontaneously, and that the Tao existed in Chaos from all eternity. A few passages in the *Tao teh king*, referring to this difficult problem, may be translated as follows:

"Use the Tao (or *road* of the Universe) as a *tao* (or *road* for your conduct), for it is not a road in the ordinary sense of this term. Praise its fame, for its fame is not like any ordinary fame. Before it had any fame (among men), it existed at the beginning of Heaven and Earth; it has now its fame, because it is the producing mother of all beings that are.[1]

I do not know whose son (or product) it is, for it existed even before Imperial Heaven, studded with constellations.[2]—There was something chaotic, vast and complete; it existed before the existence of Heaven and Earth. It was still; it was shapeless; it stood alone, and did not change; it circulated everywhere and

[1] § 1. [2] § 4.

showed no decay. Consider it as the creating mother of whatever exists under the sky. Its name is unknown to me; I designate it by the word Tao.[1]

The myriads of beings in the world depend on it for their birth and existence."[2]

In the writings of Chwang we read that

"at the very first beginning there was nothing; in that nothing there was the fameless [Tao], out of which the Universe arose. The Universe thus was, but it had no form. That from which beings then borrowed their existence was its power or virtue [teh]; the formless mass divided, and thus there was, without any interruption, the process which is called life, and the creation of beings by the stability (of the earth) and the motion (of heaven)."[3]

In the writings of Kwan we find the categorical statement that, "the Tao produced heaven and earth."[4]

These three patriarchs, accordingly, rose to

[1] § 25. [2] § 34.
[3] Book 5, or Chapter 12. [4] Book 14, or Chapter 40.

the conception of a power producing but not creating, which existed before heaven and earth.

The names Lao, Chwang and Kwan are those of a triad whom we may call the patriarchs of Taoism. Along with the Classics, it is their writings from which the principles and the development of Universism must be studied in the first place. The *Tao teh king*, or "the Canon of Tao and Virtue," or "the Canon of Taoistic Virtue," is well known outside China, because it has been translated many times into European languages; it may owe this honour to the fact that the task of translating it correctly is well-nigh hopeless. According to established opinion, its author Lao or Lao-tszĕ was an old man when Confucius lived. Chwang, or Chwang-tszĕ, or Chwang Cheu, lived in the second half of the fourth century B.C. His writings entitled *Chwang-tszĕ*, have, together with the *Tao teh king*, been Englished by Legge, the scholarly translator of the Chinese Classic of Confucianism. The work which bears the title of *Kwan-tszĕ*, more voluminous than the writings of Lao and Chwang together, contains, in the main, the exposition of ethical and political philosophy

on the Universistic principle. The author, named Kwan-tszĕ, Kwan Chung or Kwan T-wu, probably lived in the seventh century B.C., so that the work, if composed at that time, would actually carry the existence of Taoism up to the dawn of the reliable history of East Asia. It shows, however, clear evidence of large additions by other hands; but even though it may have been written in a later age,—as late in fact as the Han dynasty,—it is a valuable source of knowledge of ancient Taoist doctrine, and most valuable as a commentary and complement to the books of Lao and Chwang.

These three books of Lao, Chwang, and Kwan have exercised a dominating influence upon the development of Taoism as a separate system of religion. It was they in particular which gave authoritative directions for the adjustment of man and his conduct to the characteristics and qualities of the Tao of the Universe; and as those directions are, moreover, the most ancient known, they have always been regarded as the holiest, that is to say, as the foundation stones on which was built up the ethical and religious system that is called the Tao of Man. The writings of Lao, Chwang and Kwan were never acknowledged by

Confucianism as its classical books. The reason of this exclusion is as yet unknown; for the present we must content ourselves with the supposition that they were not believed to have been produced by Confucius, nor by any members of the school inspired by him. The question deserves investigation, seeing that this exclusion marks the bifurcation of Taoism and Confucianism from the primeval universistic stock. From the moment this process of separation was accomplished, that is to say, from the Han epoch, the writings of Lao, Chwang, and Kwan have, with a few others of less significance, stood by themselves as a special set of Taoist bibles, though set fraternally side by side with the bibles of Confucianism.

CHAPTER II

THE TAO OF MAN

IN the preceding Chapter I have demonstrated that the basis of Chinese philosophy and religion is the moving, living, creating Universe, or the process of Nature, the Order of the World, called the Tao or Way. Moreover, I have stated that this order manifests itself by the revolution of time, especially by every round of the seasons of the year, that is, by the vicissitudes of the operations of the Yang and the Yin, the bright and the dark, respectively the warm and the cold souls of the Universe. I have furthermore referred to the great universistic dogma that man is a product of this dual soul of the Universe, as he has likewise a dual soul, viz., a *shen*, which is a particle of the Yang, and a *kwei*, which is a particle of the Yin. Man accordingly is a product of the Order of the World; actually he is a part of it. His creation and destruction being effected by that Order, his

existence is in every respect determined by the Universal Law, the name of which is Tao.

These fundamental dogmas are, to this day, the basis of both the Confucian and Taoist doctrines about the proper conduct of man. This conduct must be in accordance with the Tao, or Order of the Universe; therefore it is called the Tao of Man. The *Yih king*, the principal bible of Universism, also contains a great dogma from which such conformation of man with the Tao borrows all its importance: the Tao is the source of all goodness and blessing, the *summum bonum*. "The universal Yin and the universal Yang are the Tao; that which proceeds from it is goodness (*shen*), and that which it makes is the human character."[1] This goodness, according to all authors, the Tao owes to the fact that under its influence Heaven and Earth benevolently cooperate in giving birth to all beings, animate and inanimate, and nourish and sustain them all with like benevolence; this goodness constitutes the supreme quality or virtue of the Universe, expressed of old by the word *teh*.

[1] *Hi ts'zĕ*, I.

"The main virtue of Heaven and Earth," says the *Yih king*, "is creation."[1]

Heaven and Earth being roused (by the Tao), myriads of beings are produced by evolution.[2]

Heaven and Earth nourish the myriads of beings; the perfect or holy man, accordingly, nourishes virtue of higher order, so that it may reach the myriads of beings.[3]

"The soul of Man being a part of the Yang and the Yin, which constitute the Tao, it follows that its qualities, that is to say, Man's character or instinct, called *sing*, are naturally good." "It is," says the *Yih king*, "the Celestial Tao which, causing the spontaneous evolution of beings, adjusts for each one the natural endowments which constitute his *sing*."[4]

Heaven and Earth being placed in their positions, the mutations [of the Yang and the Yin] occur in them; these mutations make the character of Man, and continuously preserve and sustain it, being thus the gate through which righteousness, produced by the Tao, enters into man."[5]

[1] *Hi ts'zĕ*, II. [2] *T'wan*, II. [3] *T'wan*, I.
[4] *T'wan*, I. [5] *Hi ts'zĕ*, I.

The *Yih king* elaborates this doctrine by teaching that the human character is a complex of four cardinal virtues, respectively emanating from the four highest qualities of Heaven. When we open this Classic at the very first page, we observe that its first words are: "Heaven has priority; it is all-pervading, beneficent and immutably correct." And in one of the Appendices, we read:

"*Priority* is the chief quality of natural goodness (*shen*); the man who is eminently virtuous is the embodiment of benevolence, and thereby becomes the first and principal among men. *All-pervading* means the assemblage of excellences; the man who is highly virtuous is such an assemblage, and therefore fit to assimilate himself to the laws and rites of social life. *Beneficence* is the harmonious union of all things righteous; the man who has virtue in an eminent degree benefits living creatures, and accordingly is fit to unite harmoniously in himself all righteous things. And *immutable correctness* is the basis of all actions; the man who is eminently virtuous has immutability, and makes it the foundation of everything he does. If the

man of eminent virtue cultivates those four virtues (benevolence, laws and rites of social life, righteousness, correctness), he is first and principal, all-pervading, beneficent, and immutably correct."[1]

Those four inherent cardinal virtues of man, emanating from the cardinal virtues or qualities of Heaven, are known among the Chinese as *shang*, or "constant virtues," eternal and immutable as Heaven or the Universe itself. The fourth, immutable correctness, is generally identified with knowledge or wisdom, the sure guide towards correctness. The four virtues constitute the Tao of Man. They always have been, and still are, the sum and substance of morality, the main pillar of the classical Confucian system of ethics, side by side with the dogma that the heaven-bestowed character of man, which they constitute, is naturally and inherently good (*shen*). True, there have lived, in the classical time, thinkers who disputed the natural goodness of man, maintaining that his character is a mixture of good and evil, either of which may preponderate according to the way or discipline

[1] *Wen yen*, I.

by which he has been brought up or educated. There are even writings of a sage[1] who asserted that man's innate character is depraved, and that the good in him is merely factitious. But all these opinions have been silenced forever, and relegated to the domain of false doctrine, first by Mencius, the grand master of the Confucian school, whose writings have always held a place among the Classics; as also by Khung Kih, or Tszĕ-szĕ, a grandson of Confucius, the reputed author of the *Chung yung*, which likewise is a classic or bible of Confucianism. This book opens with these remarkable words: "What heaven has bestowed is the character (*sing*); following the character is the Tao [of man], and the cultivation of this Tao is synonymous with instruction." Thus was the discipline of adaptation to the Universe made by one of the chief masters of the Confucian school the substratum of ethical education in the Confucian system.

The principal of the four cardinal virtues is, according to all Chinese sages, observance of the laws of social life, which are called *li;* that is, all the good rules of human conduct, rescripts and

[1] Siün Hwang or Siün-tszĕ, who lived not long after Mencius.

customs of family life, society and government, besides rites and religion—in short, about the whole Tao of Man. They were, indeed, categorically declared by Confucius and his early school to constitute the means by which Man conforms himself to the Tao of Heaven, which conformity is necessary in order that one may live; besides, the great sage has taught that they take their origin directly from the Universe and Heaven: that is to say, they are perfectly natural. Accordingly, no state or dynasty, nor even family can exist without them. This dogma implies that there must be a Confucian State Religion, exercised and maintained by the reigning dynasty, and that this religion must be based on the Tao. Of course the dogma is eminently classical; we find it in one of the books of the *Li ki* in the following terms:

"Yes, it was by means of the *li* that the ancient rulers received and handed down the Tao of Heaven, in order to regulate the passions of men. Therefore he who does not observe the *li* must die, and he who possesses them shall live"; for it is said in the *Shi king*: "Look at the

rat; it has its limbs, but there are men who have no *li;* a man without a *li* will he not quickly die (as a rat without limbs)? This is so because the *li* have their root in heaven, their divisions on the earth, their branches even among the spectres and gods; they extend accordingly to the worship of the dead and sacrifices of any kind, also to archery and chariot-driving, to capping (young men) and marriage, to audiences and missions. It is because the perfect man promulgated the *li* that the ruling dynasties in the world under heaven got them to rule the world by means of them."[1]

"The *li* then positively have their origin in the Great Universum, which, dividing itself, became Heaven and Earth, and, revolving, is the Yin and the Yang, which by their mutations produce the four seasons, and by their division form demons and gods. That which it sends down is Fate, the administration of which is in Heaven. Therefore the meaning of the term *li* is 'chief principle of Man.' It is through the *li* that Man speaks the truth and cultivates

[1] *Li yun*, I.

concord; they are, accordingly, the material which unites his skin to his flesh, his muscles to his bones. They are the chief principle because of which the living are nourished, the dead properly buried, and the spirits and gods worshipped; they are the great channel by means of which we comprehend the Tao of Heaven and act in compliance with the nature (*sing*) of our fellow-men. It is on this account that the saints (rulers) conceived that their knowledge of the *li* should never be exhausted, for whenever a state had gone to ruin, a dynasty to downfall, a people to destruction, the fact was that the rulers had previously abandoned the *li*."[1]

The Tao of the Universe, creating the Tao or conduct of man, thus virtually, according to Confucius and his school, pervades human life in all its parts. We may say that the human Tao embraces the performance of the duties imposed by the conditions of life, in which the Tao of the Universe, creating man and allowing him to grow and live under its almighty sway, naturally places

[1] *Li yun*, IV.

him. We may also say that the human Tao, represented by the cardinal virtues, is the "path" in which the macrocosm makes the microcosm walk, the path of human morality in general. The word Tao, accordingly, means correct behaviour, the proper rules of life and religion, good principles; it is used throughout the Classics in all these meanings. To this day Tao has remained the standard term for all superior qualities in man. The Confucian Classics have been, since the Han dynasty, the fundamental books for ethical education and political wisdom. This fact stamps them as Taoist books.

Indeed, they have ever been treated by the government and the most learned men of the nation as the sole guides for the Tao of Man. It is they that teach the Chinese people the opinions, principles, actions, and politics of its first, and therefore holiest, ancestors, the "perfect or holy men," who, better than any creature, knew what that Tao is, because they lived during its establishment among mankind, and even took an active part therein. The rules of logic therefore dictate a slavish adherence to these books as bibles for individual, domestic, religious, social and political life. The princi-

ples promulgated by these books constitute, as we know, Confucianism. This is therefore canonical, orthodox, for, since there is only one Tao or Order of the World, and one set of bibles or Classics promulgating and maintaining that Order among men, all other religion and morality must naturally be inconsistent with the Universe itself, and therefore dangerous for the government and the human race. Wisdom and policy thus absolutely forbid the existence of any other religious and ethical doctrine, except Taoistic Confucianism or Confucian Taoism. The Tao alone represents all that is true and orthodox. It embraces all correct and righteous dealings; it is even the creator of all these good things, as it is, in fact, the creator of all things whatever. This Tao, the motion and motive power of the Universe, has no superior, and even no equal. Hence there is no room for any second set of moral, religious or political rules. And if by any chance any such rules, not founded on the Classics, should arise, they must be false, and productive of evil of every sort; and every true, right-minded Confucian statesman is under the strictest obligation to destroy them, root and branch, wherever they exist or crop up. He has

to destroy them in the bud, before they can produce confusion within the *li*, the rules for private, domestic, religious, and social life, the only classical ethics which keep man, in thought, word, and deed, in perfect harmony with the Order of the Universe.

These doctrines and dogmas afford a complete explanation of the fact that the Classics are the only books which have always found supreme favour among sages, statesmen, and scholars. They explain why the Classics are held to be the basis of all civilisation and learning, why a thorough knowledge of their teachings always was the chief, nay the only thing required in the world-famed examinations which open the door to official preferment. It is now clear why the word "scholar" and "statesman" are synonymous with "Confucianist." All writings outside the scope of the Classics either are neutral, and therefore beneath the notice of scholars and statesmen, good only for certain second-rate and third-rate minds bent on idle occupations; or else they breathe another spirit, necessarily heterodox, heretical, morally corrupting, and dangerous to society and state.

Dogmatism is always and everywhere in this

world the mother of intolerance and persecution. Could it be otherwise in China? Certainly not. There we find indeed the school of Confucius, in close alliance with the State, which has entirely assimilated itself with it, imbued with a fanatical animosity against everything religious and ethical which cannot be covered by the idea Classicism, and against all teachings not built upon the foundation of these holy writings. Crusades against false doctrines are preached by the *Shu king*, one of the holiest among the Classics, in a chapter assumed to have been written in the 23d century before our era. Confucius himself declared cultivation of heresy to be injurious. And Mencius, whose writings too, are classical, laid upon the shoulders of all future ages the duty of persecuting heresy. He categorically defines heresy as everything which departs from the teachings of Confucius and the sages of a still greater antiquity. The *literati*, including the mandarins (who are recruited from their midst by means of the state examinations), have always been persecutors of false doctrine; indeed, it is they who uphold the government that is based upon the only true Confucian doctrine. The common people, deprived of school-

ing, are free from fanatical Confucianism. They have the privilege of supplying victims and martyrs for the blood-drenched altar of intolerant officialism.

Such are the reasons why the Chinese State would naturally persecute Christianity and Islam, and also Buddhism and the numerous religious communities or sects which this religion has called into existence among the people. Their obstinate propagandism, religious practices, and pious meetings were frequently punished with the strangling rope, flogging, and exile. Under the recently deposed dynasty persecution was very severe. Imperial resolutions and decrees relating to persecution of sects may be counted by hundreds. Many uprisings of sects, smothered in streams of blood, are declared by imperial decrees and resolutions to have been preceded by bloody persecutions under full imperial approval.[1]

We now perfectly understand that, since it is the Tao which produces virtue (*teh*) and goodness (*shen*) in the widest sense, the expression "posses-

[1] For fuller information on this subject I refer to my *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China.*

sion of the Tao" denotes perfection and excellence, the height of virtue and, consequently, the height of felicity, as also assimilation with the Tao of the Universe, or Heaven. In the *Tao teh king* we read:

> "The Tao of Heaven has no favourites, but always accompanies the man who has natural goodness (*shen*[1]).
>
> When the Tao is lost, laws and rites of social life (*li*) are lost, and loss of the latter means the attenuation of loyalty and trustworthiness, and is therefore the cause of anarchy and disorder."[2]

Accordingly, the man who has gained the Tao is the perfect man. We know that the operations of the Tao of the Universe are those of the *shen* or gods, which are the parts of the Yang or celestial half of the Universe; it is then a logical conclusion that the man who has the Tao actually is such a god, and that the Tao is called *Shen Tao*, "the Tao of the gods," or "Tao of divinity." We all know this word in its Japanese form Shinto; indeed Taoism has existed from an early date in the Land

[1] § 79. [2] § 38.

of the Rising Sun. *Shen Tao* is a classical term, occuring in the *Yih king*. There we read this significant passage·

> "The perfect or holy men observing the *Shen Tao* of Heaven, by which the four seasons proceed without any irregularity, based their instruction upon that *Shen Tao*, with the result that all under heaven submitted to their rule."[1]

This classical passage has influenced the system of government for all ages. It assured rulers that they would secure thorough obedience and peace in their states, if they faithfully educated their people in the Tao of the gods. They have done so by means of the Classics, with the fervent respect for the rescripts of the holy ancients which has always characterised them.

Possession of the human Tao thus leads Man to the highest ideal state of felicity and power, which is nothing less than holiness or divinity. We find this theory preached with the greatest emphasis in the Classics, and in the writings of Lao-tszĕ and Chwang-tszĕ, and it is, accordingly,

[1] *T'wan*, I.

one of the chief doctrines that Confucianism and Taoism have in common.[1] The excellence of the man who assimilates his life and conduct with the Tao is preached by the *Yih king* in the following expressive terms:

> "Yes, the great man is he who assimilates his virtues with those of Heaven and Earth, his intellect with the sun and moon, his rules of conduct with the four seasons, his fortunes and misfortunes with the *kwei* and the *shen*. He behaves in advance of Heaven (*i. e.*, he conforms to it by timely initiative), and consequently Heaven does not go against him; he follows Heaven and thus reverently adapts his conduct to the four seasons, and so Heaven again does not go against him; how much less will men go against him, and how much less will the *kwei* and the *shen* do so!"[2]

Confucius himself, according to Chwang-tszĕ,[3] said explicitly to his disciples, that the perfect or holy man naturally is a Taoist:

[1] See the next Chapter.

[2] *Wen yen.*

[3] Book 10, or Chapter 31.

"From the Tao it is that the myriads of beings are born. Beings who fail to obtain it incur death, but those who do obtain it live and exist. Those who in their business of life sin against it are ruined, but those who conform to it become perfect. Therefore the holy man attaches the highest importance to the Tao wherever it is."

Among the means which the ancient sages of Universism regarded as effective in bringing about man's conformity with the Tao and, accordingly, his divine perfection, imitation of the Tao, its qualities or virtues, stood foremost. In fact, behaving as the Universe behaves is adaptation to the Universe, and as the Universe is supremely good, imitation of it is virtue.

The *Yih king* contains on this head many hints.

"Heaven in its motion displays firmness; therefore the man who is highly virtuous never ceases to render himself powerful.[1]

If he keeps his head aloft above all beings, the myriads of states altogether enjoy repose."[2]

[1] The Appendix called *Siang*, I. [2] *T'wan*, I.

This means that the sovereign, as he represents Heaven, whose son he is, ought, for the maintenance of his authority and dignity, to be majestic and awe-inspiring like Heaven; then he will keep his states as quiet and peaceful as, by its paramount power, Heaven maintains the stability of the Earth.

The creative power of the Universe is the annual process of production which is brought about by the Yang and the Yin or the Tao; this power brings forth everything for everybody indiscriminately, and thus works with perfect impartiality. Impartiality (*kung*) in administering government is therefore the natural duty of rulers. Partiality (*puh kung tao*) on their part is a violation of the Universal Law; it disturbs the Tao and therefore must inevitably create disorder in their states.

"Heaven," wrote Kwan-tszĕ, "is impartial and just, and without any selfishness; therefore its protection covers both the beautiful and the ugly. And the Earth is impartial and equitable, and without selfishness; and therefore the great and the small alike are borne by it.[1]

[1] Book 20, or Chapter 64.

The perfect man is like Heaven, which covers everything without partiality; he is like the Earth, which bears everything without partiality. The partial man brings confusion and anarchy into the world under heaven.[1]

A ruler who possesses Tao, enacts laws with natural goodness (*shen*) and wisdom, and without partiality; but a ruler who has no Tao, after enacting laws throws them aside and acts with partiality. If he who is the highest of men thus nullifies his own laws and reigns with partiality, then those who are his ministers will perform acts of partiality as if it were impartiality.[2]

When the Tao of Heaven is followed, and thus impartiality is displayed, then even those who live far away from one another are naturally bound together by bonds of love. But when the Tao of Heaven is abandoned and deeds of partiality are committed, then even sons will hate their mothers, and mothers their sons.[3]

"In order that a stream of virtue [*teh*] (emanating from the perfect ruler), moistening and fructifying, may pour down upon the myri-

[1] Book 13, or Chapter 37. [2] Book 10, or Chapter 30.
[3] Book 20, or Chapter 64.

ads of beings equally, I enjoin that the perfect man shall assimilate himself with Heaven and with Earth."[1]

The demand on rulers of mankind to be thoroughly impartial and just, like nature itself, implies, of course, that they should be impartial in respect to themselves also, that is to say, without self-love and selfishness. Unselfishness is, in fact, a capital quality or virtue of the Universe.

"Heaven is perpetual," wrote Lao-tszĕ, "and Earth is permanent. The reason why Heaven is perpetual and Earth permanent, is that they do not exist for themselves. Therefore the perfect man puts his own person last, and yet it obtains the foremost place; he treats his person as if it were foreign to him, and yet his person is preserved. Is it not by his unselfishness that his own interests are best cared for?"[2]

The Order of the Universe is perfectly orderly. What is the reason of it? The parts of the

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 11.

[2] *Tao teh king*, § 7.

Universe do not collide. And why do they not collide? Because they move and operate with mutual *shun*, "Compliance." Compliance, accordingly, is a cardinal duty of rulers, the practice of which enables them to keep their states and peoples in an orderly condition. This is a political dogma, on which peculiar stress is laid by Confucian Classics and other Taoist books.

> "Heaven and Earth," says the *Yih king*, "move with display of compliance, and hence the sun and the moon make no errors (in their course), nor do the four seasons deviate (from their order). If a perfect man likewise lets his movements be ruled by compliance, the punishments which he inflicts are purely correct (not erroneous), and, accordingly, the people submit to him.[1]—Is not compliance the Tao of the Earth? This Tao complies with heaven, and its conduct is in accordance with the seasons."[2]

Evidently this doctrine implies that rulers should foster good rule by complying to a great extent

[1] *T 'wan*, I. [2] *Wen yen*.

with public will and opinion. It forbids stupid tyranny, and may explain why the first emperor of the present dynasty at the conquest of the empire styled his reign *Shun chi*, "Government through Compliance." The principle might be appealed to by those who demand reform on the basis of constitutionalism.

In the writings of Kwan-tszĕ it is stated with the greatest assurance that the holy, perfect sovereigns of China's most ancient time had ruled with scrupulous observance of that great law of Compliance.

"When those foreign rulers were living in the world under heaven, the people took shelter under their divine virtue, and thus they used that virtue to govern the people properly. Yet if they had taken advice from others apart from the people, they would have taken unwise measures; but they took advice from others in union with the people, and—their measures were perfect. They had the virtues and qualities of T'ang and Wu, and nevertheless had regard to what was said by the people in the markets. Since in this

way those wise rulers acted in compliance with the will of men, and, suppressing their own passions and instincts, acted in accordance with what public will agreed upon, they were capable of being one body with the people; and being one with it, they kept the realm by means of the realm itself, and the people by means of the people itself. Thus it was that their people was never ready to do anything which was wrong."[1]

And Lao-tszĕ wrote: "The perfect ruler has no invariable will of his own, but makes the will of his people his own will."[2]

The duty of every ruler to bless his subjects with a government conducted in compliance with their will and wishes, is emphasised by the assertion in the *Li yun* that it produces for all classes of society an ideal state of harmony and concord, safety and happiness. It causes, according to this Confucian Classic, the living to be properly nourished, the dead to be well buried, and the spirits and gods to be duly worshipped. The holy rulers of ancient times practised compliance

[1] Book 10, or Chapter 30. [2] *Tao teh king*, § 49.

with highly wonderful results. They did not order mountaineers to live in valleys, nor islanders to settle on the mainland; and thus they caused no hardships. In employing the people, they were sure to be so compliant that the people did not suffer from any calamities, such as famine, drought, inundation, plague; for heaven did not withhold its Tao from them, and accordingly earth did not withhold its treasures, so that there always was sufficient fertilising dew and water.

The doctrine of Compliance, enjoying this high classical authority, has always had a place in the Tao of China's potentates, that is to say, in their system of politics. It is, indeed, a noteworthy feature of the government of China that the people are generally allowed great liberty in the management of their own social affairs, as long as it can be reasonably tolerated or connived at. It is a *laissez-faire* system, preventing much discontent and collision and the disastrous consequences which collisions might bring down upon both parties. It is a system of promulgation of imperial orders and decrees, without insistence on absolute obedience. Such things appear strange in an autocratic country like China, yet Confucian Taoism explains them

well. Compliance may, of course, mean such virtues as forbearance, tolerance, indulgence, mildness, even unselfishness and abnegation.

It is co-ordinate with humility and with disinterestedness or self-effacement, on which virtues great stress is laid by the ancient sages of the Taoist system, because they are displayed by the Universe. They call them *chung*, or *hü*, emptiness.

"The Universal Tao," wrote Lao-tszĕ, "is all-pervading. The myriads of beings depend on it for their birth and existence, and it does not refuse them anything; and yet, when it has made and accomplished them, it does not call itself their owner. It loves and feeds all beings, and yet makes no assumption of being their lord and owner. It ever was without desires, and yet its name must be mentioned even in the smallest things. All beings have recourse to it, and yet it does not behave as their master and owner. Praise its greatness. Hence it is that the perfect man never makes himself great, and in this wise can accomplish his greatness.[1]

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 34.

"The Tao produces all things, and nourishes them; it endows them with life, and yet it does not treat them as its property; it makes them, and does not lay claim to them; it is superior to them all, and yet does not exercise supremacy over them. This is its mystic virtue. The beings are produced by it, and not treated by it as its property; it makes them, and does not lay claim to them. So when you have made or accomplished something, do not take it to yourself; yea, do not do so, and it will never go away from you.[1]

"The Tao is empty, and so is the practice of it; we must not be full of ourselves.[2]—When you have accomplished something and thereby gained fame, then let your own self retire into the background, for this is the Tao of heaven."[3]

Indeed, such conduct is mere imitation of heaven's conduct, since the sun, moon, and stars, after shining, set; the moon, after its fulness, wanes; the temperature of the summer retires when it has brought the vegetable kingdom to maturity.

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 10 and § 2. [2] *Op. cit.*, § 4. [3] *Op. cit.*, § 9.

"The man of the highest natural goodness," said Lao-tszĕ, "is like water, the natural goodness of which consists in its benefiting all things, but occupying without contest a [low] place, which all men dislike. Hence its ways are like that of Tao.[1]

That whereby the rivers and the seas are able to be as kings of the valley-streams [receiving the tribute of them all], is their skill in being lower than these. Hence the holy man, wishing to be above the people, keeps himself with his orders below them, and wishing to be before them, places his person behind them. Thus, though the holy man has his place above, the people do not feel his weight, nor, though he has his place before them, do they feel it injurious to them. Therefore all in the world under heaven delight to exalt him, and are not weary of him. Because he does not strive, the whole world finds it impossible to strive with him."[2]

The *Yih king* enhances the importance of these ethical doctrines by emphatically preaching pun-

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 8. [2] *Op. cit.*, § 66.

ishment of the arrogant, and reward of the humble by the Tao of Heaven and Earth, and by the gods and devils which are the agents of the Tao. The Tao of Heaven decreases the felicity of the arrogant and increases that of the humble. The Tao of the Earth changes the good condition of the arrogant and floods the humble (with blessings). The devils harm the arrogant, and the gods give happiness to the humble. And the Tao of Man hates the arrogant and loves the modest.[1] And, according to the *Shu king*, it was solemnly declared, as early as twenty-three centuries before the Christian era, by the holy statesman *Yih*, in the face of his Imperial lord, Yu the Great, that the arrogant call injury down upon themselves, and the modest receive increase of felicity—this being the Tao of heaven.[2]

Compliance and self-effacement being the source of so many blessings, Lao-tszĕ devoted many words to it in his *Tao teh king*.

"He who stoops will maintain himself complete; he who bends will keep himself straight. . . . The reason why the perfect

[1] *T'wan*, I.

[2] The book *Ta Yü mu*.

man holds in his embrace the Universe itself, and so is the model of all that lives under the sky, is that he is free from self-display, and therefore shines bright; free from a selfish-existence, and therefore is glorious; free from struggling for the sake of himself, and therefore performs meritorious works; free from self-sympathy, and therefore has superiority. As he does not indulge in struggle with others, no one in the world struggles with him.[1]

"Should all the world say that we are great, we should yet behave as if we were not so great or so good as others. It is just greatness which should make us behave as though not so good as others. . . . Yes, we possess three precious things; hold them, and appreciate them. The first is love for others, the second frugality, the third is shrinking from standing foremost in the world. . . . With this third quality we can become chiefs seated on thrones. Nowadays we give up the hindmost place and try only to be foremost—yet the end is death!"[2]

Self-effacement, disinterestedness, unselfishness,

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 22. [2] *Op. cit.*, § 67.

—these virtues are all comprised in that old Taoist term "emptiness," which expresses the contrary of the vice of "being full of one's self," and they are equivalent to absence of desires and passions. Man, to become "empty" like the Tao of Heaven, ought, like Heaven, to cast off materialistic desires, sympathies or aversion; he ought to live in a state of indifference and insensibility. Desiring nothing, not even knowledge or wisdom, and not being stirred up to any active striving, he becomes a nothing. In this state of "dispassion" or apathy, he is perfectly pure, as pure as Heaven itself. This Stoicism is preached with peculiar emphasis by Kwan-tszĕ as the way leading to divinity, to loss of materiality, assimilation with the Tao, and finally—since the Tao is eternal—to perpetuation of the spiritual or divine existence:

"The Tao is not far off, and yet it is difficult to reach. If man makes himself void of desires, *shen* will enter into him and abide in him; if he sweeps such impurity out of him, *shen* will remain in him for good. 'Emptiness' and 'nothingness' are immateriality; I call them Tao. . . . Heaven is emptiness; Earth is quietude; they do

not struggle together. . . . Do away with your selfishness, and do not speak; then your *shen* and intelligence will naturally remain in you. . . . By comprehending well the practice of 'taciturnity' and 'inactivity' (*wu wei*), you will comprehend the warp and groundwork of the Tao. . . . The man of superior virtue is 'placid' and 'contented'; he is inactive, he discards knowledge and wisdom.

"There is between 'emptiness' and Man no separation, and yet only the perfect man acquires the Tao of 'emptiness'; therefore, I said, the Tao dwells among men and nevertheless is hard to find. That which rules Man in this world is his vitality. If he gets rid of his desires, 'emptiness' will pervade him completely, and this being the case, he is quiet; being quiet, he consists of vitality, and he who consists of vitality becomes independent of matter. Independent, he is refulgent, he is a god (*shen*). Divinity is the highest dignity that exists. . . . Therefore, I say, unless we purify ourselves [from desires and passions], divinity will not dwell in us.

"Emptiness means that there is nothing hid-

den within; therefore I say, if you remove knowledge and wisdom from you, what then can lead you to striving for anything? and if there is nothing within you, what plans will you ever make? And if you strive for nothing and lay no plans, you will be without cares, and cares being absent, you are back at the starting-point, 'emptiness.' The Tao of Heaven is 'empty,' and this is so because it has no materiality; being 'empty,' it cannot be exhausted; being immaterial, nothing drives it from its throne; and not being driven from its throne it overflows the myriads of beings without ever changing."[1]

Let us make the summary of this quotation. "Emptiness" (*hü*) or "nothingness" (*wu*), acquired by suppression or removal of the passions and desires, is correlate with *khi chi* or "removal of knowledge or wisdom," with *wu wei* or "inaction," with *tsing* or "quiescence" and *puh yen* or "taciturnity." It means *t'ien* or "placidity," *yu* or "contentedness," *wuli*, or "freedom from cares or anxious thoughts." It also means *kiëh* or "purity," which naturally causes *shen* of the

[1] Book 13, or Chapter 36.

Universe to settle in the individual and abide in him; in other terms, his *shen* or vital soul, always re-invigorated by the Universe, remains strong, becomes, indeed, stronger and stronger; he thus becomes unsubstantial, immaterial, assimilated with the Tao itself; his strong *tsing* or vitality places him beyond the reach of bad influences around, renders him *tuh lih* or "independent"; he becomes an integrant part of the vital soul of the Universe itself, *ming shen* or "a shining or intelligent divinity." We may briefly define the system by saying that "emptiness" or "dispassion" or "indifferentism" is equivalent to *wu wei*, *i.e.*, "inaction" or "quiescence." Lao-tszĕ preached the cultivation of those highest qualities of nature in the following words:

> "Carry up the state of 'emptiness' to its highest degree, and thus maintain quiescence with unwearying application.[1]
>
> Not to value superior virtue is the way to keep the people from striving. To set no value on articles which are difficult to get is the way to keep the people from becoming thieves. Not

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 16.

to mind what is desirable is the way to keep the heart from disorder. Therefore the perfect man in the administration of his people empties their hearts, but fills their bellies; he weakens their will, but strengthens their bones; he constantly prevents their having any knowledge or desire, and causes those who have knowledge to refrain from using it. When thus they practice 'inaction' nothing is unruly or unruled."[1]

This Universistic system of ethics, expounded by the Classics and by the writings of Lao, Chwang and Kwan, is the only one of which ancient Chinese literature gives us the principles and tenets. We must therefore perforce conclude that no other system existed, for, if another had existed, it would infallibly have left some impression on the literature. The Classics have maintained the system of the Confucian school, ever since this was created under the Han dynasty. We cannot fail to perceive that it actually was a system of *ascetic* discipline, leading to purity and divinity. But Confucianism rejected one principal feature on which Kwan and Lao laid special

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 3.

stress, namely, the suppression of knowledge or wisdom. Indeed, the Classics, especially the writings of Mencius, held up the cultivation of wisdom as one of the great means leading to perfection and divinity. Besides, Mencius identified wisdom or knowledge with "immutable correctness," the fourth of the cardinal virtues which are inherent in man by heaven itself (see p. 33), viz., benevolence, righteousness, regard for laws and rites of social life, and wisdom.

> "These four principles," said he, "as naturally belong to a man as his four limbs. . . . Since we have them in ourselves, let us know how to give to all of them their full development and completion.[1] They are not infused from without; we positively have them (naturally in ourselves.)"[2]

The imperative duty of cultivating knowledge or wisdom, together with the three other great endowments of the Universe, thus having been imposed upon mankind by the greatest apostle of Confucius, Confucianism was forced to diverge from Taoism. In studying the problem of the bifurca-

[1] Book *Kung-sun Chen*, I, 6. [2] Book *Kao-tszĕ*, I, 6.

tion of Universistic religion in China in the period of Han, that famous cardinal virtue *chi*, knowledge or wisdom, should certainly not be overlooked as a factor of importance in the process. Let it be noted, however, that the conflict may have concerned merely the meaning of the word removal of "knowledge," which may have meant, in Taoist eyes, removal of "consciousness or feeling," *chi* having indeed the signification which these three words express. It does not appear that in later ages Taoists have generally excelled in ignorance.

The Classics did not, however, contain anything compelling Confucianism to dissent from ancient Taoism in respect to the doctrine of *wu wei* or "inaction," *tsing* or "quiescence," and *puh yen* or "taciturnity." This famous principle of the Tao of Man has, accordingly, forever remained common property of both systems. We may safely reduce the three terms to one: "quietism." Contemplation of the Universe led, of course, to the discovery of the plain truth that the Universe performs its beneficent work of production and protection without passion; that it operates smoothly and quietly without ever visibly exerting itself; it is free from effort, and all its processes proceed

successfully without striving, demonstration or noise. The Tao is not the active cause of all movement in the Cosmos and in its phenomena, but it is that movement itself. It is not action, but law.

"The law of the Tao," says Lao-tszĕ, "is spontaneity."[1] And in the *Yih king* we read: "The mutations or processes of the Universe work without thought or calculation, and without action; they work silently, without agitation; and yet, when they stir, they pervade every factor under the heavens."[2]

Spontaneous, therefore, must be the Tao of Man, in particular that of the ruler, who ought to be the embodiment of all perfection. The ruler must live a life moved by inward spontaneity only; he may not allow himself to be guided by self-determination or a strong will; nor may he be dominated by a spirit of initiative; he should never act a part, and, least of all, force the nature of things. Kwan-tszĕ wrote:

> "*Wu wei* is Tao; to cherish it is Virtue (*teh*); consequently there is between Tao and Virtue no difference, and those who preach both do

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 25. [2] *Hi ts'zĕ*, I.

not make any distinction between them. Rulers of men have their place on the Yin (the Earth), and as the Yin is still, I declare that any ruler who is active will lose his throne.[1]

The perfect man esteems virtue most, and active work least. Because Heaven does not operate actively, the four seasons descend in turn, and the formation and development of all that exists takes place thereby; because the ruler does not work actively, his orders and measures descend orderly, so that the myriads of works and occupations of mankind are properly accomplished.[2]

Inaction is the part of the emperor."[3]

Lao-tszĕ moved quite within this same sphere of philosophy.

"The Tao is always without action, and so there is nothing which it does not perform. If rulers are able to observe the same inaction, the myriads of beings will form and transform themselves spontaneously.[4]

[1] Book 13, or Chapter 36.
[2] Book 10, or Chapter 26.
[3] Book 1, or Chapter 5.
[4] *Tao teh king*, § 37.

Do no deeds; occupy yourself with inaction."[1] Such inactivity may be acquired gradually.

> "The man of study increases his knowledge daily, but he who cultivates the Tao diminishes his knowledge from day to day; he diminishes it and diminishes it again, till he arrives at inaction; having arrived at inaction, there is nothing which he cannot do."[2]

In other words, *wu wei* endows Man with almightiness, the same that the Tao of the Universe possesses.

As a matter of course, such almightiness, acquired by *wu wei*, may become the property especially of the rulers of the empire, who are the highest power in the Universe after Heaven and Earth; it will render them irresistible, and make their reigns successful and glorious, without the least exertion on their part.

> "The world under heaven," said Lao-tszĕ, "is an instrument in the hands of a god (the emperor). It should not be actively governed. He

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 63. [2] *Op. cit.*, § 48.

who governs it with activity will ruin it; he who firmly holds it in his grasp will lose it.[1]

A lord of mankind who is sustained by the Tao never tyrannises over the empire by the force of arms.[2]

The empire is always conquered by 'inaction'; he who takes active measures to that end is not fit to master empire.[3]

The empire is made one's own by freedom from action. . . . Therefore, a perfect man says, 'I am without action, and the people are developed and transformed spontaneously; I prefer being silent, and the people of themselves become orthodox; I do not actively occupy myself with anything, and the people of themselves become rich; I am without desires, and the people spontaneously reach the state of purity.'"[4]

Chwang-tszĕ in particular lauded *wu wei* with enthusiasm. Confucius, a good Taoist, as was every thinker of his time, greatly admired it. According to the *Lun yu*, one of the Classics, he exclaimed: "The man who reigned by absence of

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 29. [2] *Op. cit.*, § 30. [3] *Op. cit.*, § 4 S. [4] *Op. cit.*, § 57.

action, was he not *Shun* (23rd cent. B.C.)? What did he do? He made himself venerable, and [sat on his throne] facing due south; this was all he did!"[1] From a passage in Chwang-tszĕ's writings it would, however, appear that China's greatest sage was not quite a fanatical devotee of *Wu wei-ism*. Khü Ts 'eoh-tszĕ said to Ch 'ang-wu-tszĕ:

> "I heard the Master speak of the perfect man, who does not occupy himself with worldly business, and does not follow after profits, nor try to avoid what is hurtful, nor take pleasure in striving for anything, nor direct himself actively after the Tao; who has no words, and yet speaks; who speaks, and yet has no words, and thus moves beyond the dust and dirt (of the world). The Master considered this to be vain talk, but I consider it to be conduct in accordance with the excellent Tao."[2]

We learn from this episode that on a par with "inaction" was placed the practice of "speaking

[1] XV, 4.

[2] Book 1, or Chapter 2.

without words"; which means that the true Taoist had to abstain from actively teaching others, and should, without eloquence or noise, impart lessons and wisdom by the influence emanating from his naturally perfect individuality. This idea is expressed by Chwang-tszĕ in these terms:

> "The teaching of the great man emanates from him as the shadow accompanies a shape and the echo a sound. When questioned, he answers, giving all he has in his mind.[1]
>
> Those who have wisdom do not speak, but those who speak have no wisdom; hence the perfect man imparts his instruction without the use of speech."[2]

The statement that the wise do not speak, and that those who speak are not wise, occurs also in the *Tao teh king* (§ 56). In another place Chwang-tszĕ says:

> "Rule the kingdom by inaction, this is heavenly; speak to it by means of inaction, this is virtue.[3]

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 11.
[2] Book 7, or Chapter 22.
[3] Book 5, or Chapter 12.

> Heaven and Earth possess the highest excellence, and yet they say nothing. The four seasons promulgate to mankind the clearest universal law, but they do not discuss it. The myriads of beings and things exist according to perfect, natural laws, but they say nothing. . . . Therefore the men in the highest sense observed wisdom, and the most perfect men performed nothing; which means that they looked to Heaven and Earth (as the model)."[1]

Confucianism could not possibly refuse "taciturnity" a place in its system of ethics, because it is explicitly stated in the *Yih king* that "Heaven, in its silence, is self-absorbed . . . and Earth, in its stillness, is self-collected."[2]—Earth is thoroughly silent."[3] Moreover, according to another classical book, Confucius himself once said, when in a taciturn mood, "I would rather not talk." "But if thou sayest nothing, Master," Tszĕ-kung exclaimed, "what shall we, thy disciples, have to record?" "Does Heaven say aught?" the sage retorted, "and yet the seasons pursue their course,

[1] Appendix, 126. Book 7, or Chapter 22.
[2] Appendix, 127. *Hi tsʻzĕ.* I. [3] Appendix, 128. *Wen yen.*

so that all things are produced; does Heaven say aught?"[1]

We can hardly refuse to believe that the great principle of inaction or "dispassion" exercised a predominant influence on the minds of ancient Chinese religious thinkers, since we see that Lao-tszĕ went so far as to proscribe even all active striving for perfection, or holiness, wisdom and virtue.

> "Discard perfection, throw wisdom away from you," thus he admonished the ruling prince of his time, "the people will be blessed thereby a hundred times. Renounce benevolence and cast righteousness away from you, and the people will become doubly filial and tender-hearted. Renounce cleverness and cast away all desire for gain, and nowhere will there be any thieves or robbers. These three lessons I consider to contain so much that there are not characters enough to write it."[2]

It is easy enough to take this statement literally, and read in it an attack on no less than three

[1] Appendix, 129. *Lun yü*, XVII, 19. [2] *Tao teh king*, § 19.

of the four cardinal virtues which heaven itself has implanted in mankind, that is to say rebellion against the very core of the holy, classical system of morality. There is, however, in ancient writings nothing which could entitle us to suspect Taoism of such animosity against its own virtues. The august "inaction," the high quality by which the Tao itself distributes all its blessings over the human world under heaven, merely appears here in the Tao of Man in its ultimate, most sharply defined form: even in cultivating the highest virtues there should be no striving. Confucian zealots, slaves of the letter, may, however, forge out of the paragraph a branding iron with which to stigmatise Lao as author of a vile heresy.

In the same light we must read the following lines in the writings of Chwang-tszĕ:

> "Delight in clear-sightedness leads to licentious pursuit of colours, and delight in acute hearing to seeking licentiously the pleasures of musical sounds. Delight in benevolence leads to disorder in virtue, delight in righteousness to opposition to what is natural law; delight in laws and rites of social life furthers

artifices, and delight in music promotes licentiousness. Delight in perfection or holiness is an aid to ingenious tricks (magic?); delight in wisdom contributes to fault-finding. . . . Unless all men under the heavens suppress these eight passions produced by their natural character, the consequence will be that the world under the heaven will be thrown into disorder; then also men will begin to esteem and cherish those passions to such an extent that the whole world under heaven will be led astray. . . . Therefore, the man who has virtue of the higher order, if he can refrain from displaying the five (cardinal virtues) which are hidden in him, and does not betray his acuteness of sight and hearing, will sit motionless like a representation of the dead (at sacrifices), and yet his dragon (or Imperial Majesty) will appear; he will be absorbed in silence, and yet his thunder will be heard; his divine power will set to work, and heaven will follow it; while abiding in tranquillity and 'inaction,' the myriads of beings will gather under his genial influence. What more has he to do to govern the world at leisure?"[1]

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 11.

Thus we see it preached anew that dispassion and inaction, even with regard to the cultivation of virtue, are sure to open spontaneously to a ruler the way to almightiness. Virtue ought to be cultivated and displayed phlegmatically, without enthusiasm, in the same quiet manner in which the Universe displays it. Like all his actions, Man's natural goodness ought to operate spontaneously.

"A holy man," says Chwang, "copies his line of conduct from heaven, but does not try to further its works or designs; he seeks perfection in virtue, but without taking trouble for it; he excels in the Tao, but without intention to do so.[1]

The ancients, who regulated their Tao to this end, nourished their wisdom by means of placidity, and all through life never used their wisdom for doing anything with action; they accordingly used their wisdom to nourish their placidity. When wisdom and placidity thus blend together in a man and nourish each other, harmony and law are produced by his natural

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 11.

character. Yes, his virtue is that harmony, and his Tao is that law; his virtue comprises all that exits, namely benevolence; his Tao is natural law to all that exists, namely righteousness."[1]

[1] Book 6, or Chapter 16.

CHAPTER III

PERFECTION, HOLINESS, OR DIVINITY

IF the origin and first development of China's ancient system of religious ethics has been sketched intelligibly in the preceding two Chapters, we may define that system in the following terms: It is the Tao or Way of Man, which consists of man's virtues or qualities (*teh*) and the method of acquiring these spontaneously. These virtues or qualities are emanations from the virtues or qualities of the Universe; they are, in the main, four cardinal virtues (*shang*), which correspond to the four principal virtues of Heaven itself, and which constitute man's natural goodness (*shen*), which is his nature (*sing*), his moral disposition or character. The germ of those four virtues is deposited in Man with his soul (*shen*), which is a part of the Yang of the Universe; this Yang represents warmth, light, life, and is especially assimilated with Heaven. The development of those

virtues should be brought about by imitation of the qualities of Heaven, especially its *wu wei*, or inactivity, spontaneity, quietness or placidity, that is to say by suppression or regulation of the passions; indeed, seeing that the Tao or Order of the Universe itself, which is the source of all goodness, performs the work of creation and blessing spontaneously, without active effort, human virtue must operate and develop in the same dispassionate way. According to another school, especially known as the Confucian, the way to perfection is, moreover, that of wisdom, acquired by study, with the holy Classics for text-books. This is the pass-key, without which no proper understanding of China's ethical speculation and doctrine, from the oldest time to this day, is possible. By means of this key we may find the path that leads safely through Chinese literature, dealing with philosophy, morality, and religion.

The ideal purpose of that perfection of Man is his thorough assimilation with the Tao of Heaven, produced by the steady improvement of his *shen*, or *yang* soul, so that, in the end, this soul will equal in perfection and nature the myriads of immaterial *shen* or gods of which the Yang of

the Universe is composed. We may call that state "holiness" or "divinity." Ancient Taoist authors call it *chen*, "reality," a term which must have existed in the days of Lao-tszĕ, since we read in the *Tao teh king* these words, "if one cultivates it (the Tao) in himself, his virtue will become reality."[1] Elsewhere, in particular in the *Chung yung*—the Confucian Classic which is devoted in the main to Taoist perfection by virtue—holiness is called *ch'ing*, which likewise means "reality," so that we are entitled to consider this term as synonymous with *chen*. And besides, in all ancient books holiness is called *shing*. Moreover, since perfection means divinity, it is denoted by the word *shen*.

Many definitions of holiness or sanctity might be quoted from the ancient books, but the following may suffice. According to Chwang:

> "He who departs not from *chen* is to be called a man in the very highest or perfect sense.[2]
>
> *Chen* is the highest degree of vitality or spirituality; the man who does not possess such spirituality cannot possibly stir or propel others."[3]

[1] § 54. [2] Book 10, or Chapter 33. [3] Book 10, or Chapter 31.

And the philosopher Liu Ngan, who lived in the second century B.C., wrote that "the man who is *chen* is he whose natural moral constitution (*sing*) is assimilated with the Tao."[1]

What are, according to the ancient authors, the attributes of holiness?

We are told by Kwan that (since it consists in assimilation with the Yang of the Universe, which is the brightness of Heaven itself) holiness ensures possession of the brightness or intelligence, which the Yang and Heaven themselves possess. (Cf. p. 63). It is taught also by Lao that this same perfection through dispassion or *wu wei* may lead rulers to the possession of irresistibility or almightiness. (Cf. p. 69). Of course, such holiness implies the possession of all virtues which man on this earth may hope to possess. Says Chwang:

> "If reality plays a part in Man as his method of life, he serves his parents with tender filial submission and love, and his ruler with loyalty and integrity.[2]
>
> Who is a holy man? It is he who is like the saints of antiquity, who ascended heights

[1] *Hung lieh kiai*, Chapter 7. [2] Book 10, or Chapter 31.

without fear, entered water without getting wet, and went into fire without being burnt. We know that, by rising to the use of the Tao, it is possible to do such things."[1]

This is a distinct affirmation that the holy Taoist borrows from the Tao, which he possesses, superhuman, magical strength. The wonderful qualities of such god-men are sketched by Chwang in a dialogue of certain fictitious or real worthies.

"Far away, on the hill of Ku-sia, god-men dwell. Their flesh and skins are like ice and snow; they are as tender and delicate as virgins. They do not eat any of the five cereals, but inhale wind and drink dew. They ride on the clouds, with flying dragons for their teams, they ramble even beyond the four Oceans. By concentrating their divinity they can save beings from disease and plague, and secure for every year its grain harvests. . . . No beings can hurt any of these men; the greatest floods, rising to the sky, cannot drown them; nor will they feel the intensest heat, were it even great enough

[1] Book 3, or Chapter 6.

to melt metal and rocks, or to burn the ground and the hills. Out of their very dust and chaff you might still burn or cast (like pottery or bronze) men like Yao and Shun. How should they be willing to have anything to do with any materiality?"

Further, Chwang makes a man named Wang Rh apotheosize the holy man in these grandiloquent terms:

"'The man of the highest order is a god. A great lake may be burning about him, it will not burn him; the Hwangho and the Han may be frozen up, and still he will not feel any cold; thunderbolts in quick succession may split the mountains, and winds may shake the oceans, they cannot frighten him. Being so [perfect], he can drive on clouds and vapours, and, on the sun and moon, ramble beyond the oceans of the four quarters of the world. Neither death nor life makes any change in him, and how much less should anything which causes good or evil be able to do so?'"[1]

[1] Book 1, or Chapters 1 and 2.

Another wise man, according to Chwang, has said: "Men who possess divinity in a superior degree ride or drive on the light, so that their shapes vanish in it; they are what we call shining far and wide."[1]

Other Taoist writers chime in with these glorifications of the saints. Hoh Kwan-tszĕ, who is supposed to have lived in the fourth century before our era, describes their attributes in these remarkable words:

"The saint is born after Heaven and Earth, but he knows their beginning, and, though he will die before Heaven and Earth, he knows what and how will be their end. For since the Tao envelops him, he can conceive and measure such things.[2]

The strength of the saint is not that of heaven and earth, but he knows their functions. His breath is not like the Yin and the Yang, yet he can prescribe rules to these universal powers. He is but one, yet he may be the monitor of the myriads of beings. He does not concentrate in himself all excellences that exist, and yet is able

[1] Book 5, or Chapter 12. [2] Chapters 10 and 18.

to commend good, and point out faults. He is not so rich in virtues as the Tao, and yet he may be elevated above it. He does not shine so brightly as the gods, but he can be their chief. Though not concealed from view as are the *kwei* and the *shen*, he can display their spiritual power. Not so solid as metal and stone, he can, nevertheless, burn their hardness. Not formed so regularly as a square or a circle, he can construct such figures."[1]

We may then, after all these descriptions, say that, according to the eldest and principal patriarchs of Universism, the holy Taoist possesses supernatural powers and wisdom, and may employ them spontaneously to produce superhuman effects; he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, even a god among the gods. He is also invulnerable. We cannot suppose that this invulnerability was meant to be taken literally. For it cannot possibly have escaped notice that even Taoists of eminence died; their graves may have been generally known, and may have been frequented places of worship. Chwang himself mentions

[1] Chapters 18.

one Shen-pa, who lived on water only in a rock cave, to the age of seventy, without having lost his youthful complexion, till a tiger came and devoured him. But, says he, "this saint had nourished his inner man, and the tiger merely devoured the outward."[1] And the Taoist philosopher Han Fei, who lived in the third century before Christ, having mentioned a number of good Taoists who were put to death, added explicitly:

> "Those men, though eminently virtuous, and even holy, could escape neither death nor bodily mutilation and injury; and why was this the case? Well, we, stupid men, can hardly explain it."[2]

We may, therefore, conclude that eminent Taoists might die indeed, but could much better than any other individuals withstand the influences which endanger life.

"When the season of rigorous cold has come," thus Liu Ngan wrote, "and frost and snow

[1] Book 7, or Chapter 19. [2] Book 1, § 3,

descend, then we perceive the foliage of the pines and cypresses. And when the holy man is pressed by hardships, and has to brave dangers, and when perils are arrayed before him, we learn that he never loses his Tao."[1]

To the students of the history of ancient and modern religions it is of some value to know that Man in Asia, in times much older than the Christian age, possessed positive ideas about holiness and divinity, and about magical wisdom and art which such divinity conferred; and that it is possible, by the help of Chinese books, to define those ideas satisfactorily as products of an all-dominating Universism rooted in a remote antiquity.

As stated in the preceding Chapter, there is among the four virtues, which heaven has placed in every man as elements of his natural character, and the cultivation of which leads to holiness, that which the *Yih king* calls "immutable correctness," and which was identified with wisdom or knowledge, because, by wisdom, correctness of

[1] *Hung lieh kiai*, Chapter 2.

conduct may be ensured. Now we must give our attention to the fact that Confucianism has assigned to wisdom a place of honour. The doctrine of suppression of wisdom, which seems to have been a part of the great Taoist principle of "emptiness" or "dispassion," was rejected by the school of the great sage; never did this school subscribe to the doctrine that the poor in mind are the blessed, and that the realm of perfection and divinity is theirs.

The greatest impulse to this dissent was given by the grandson of Confucius, who, as we have seen (page 35), began his classic work with the affirmation that cultivation of the Tao is synonymous with instruction. The principle, "virtue by instruction," has developed Confucianism into a "system or religion of the learned" (*Yü kiao*), to which China owes its literary civilisation. This civilisation has, accordingly—be it stated with emphasis—its root in the great system of Universism.

Instruction or literary education, naturally combined with study, has thus always been declared by Taoistic Confucianism to be a matter of prime necessity. The means of instruction are the

Classics, the only reliable canons or bibles of the Tao of Man (cf. page 40). Since the formation of the Confucian system, under the Han dynasty, they always have, by unanimous judgment of all sages, been acknowledged as the one orthodox gospel for the lives and actions of the whole of humanity, as the foundation stones of the State and society, through which the Tao receives its fullest due, renders government as stable as the Universe itself, and makes mankind thoroughly prosperous and happy.

With these classical or canonical books the name of Confucius (who lived B.C. 551–479) is inseparably associated. Five are called *king;* the others are so-called *shu*. Certainly Confucius did not write them all; they belong partly to a much older, partly to a later period. He is held to have written merely one *king*, the *Ch'un-ts'iu*. Three other *kings*, called the *Shu* or History, the *Shi* or Songs, and the *Yih* or Mutations, he merely compiled or edited; and even this may not be true. In the many books which constitute the fifth *king*, entitled *Li ki* or *Memorials on Laws and Rites of Social Life*, he and his disciples are mentioned very frequently; this Classic, therefore,

appears to have been composed in the main from information about him, and from sayings originating with him. The four *shu* originated almost entirely with his disciples; they contain sayings, doctrines, and conversations of the master, mostly of an ethical and political character. Their titles are *Lun yü*, Discourses and Conversations; *Chung yung*, Doctrine of the Mean; *T'ai hioh*, Comprehensive Study; and *Meng-tszĕ*, (Works of) Mencius. We may thus equally well call Confucianism Classicism, Universism, or Taoism. It alone is orthodox, since there is only one Tao in the Universe, and one set of Classics to maintain it among men. Confucianism has reigned supreme in China to this hour. Thus it is that the whole Chinese system of education by classical study, from the lower schools, where the Classics are primers, up to the state-examinations and the appointments to state service of those who pass, virtually stand on the broad Taoist basis, as does the state machinery in general.

The emperor, since he is the supreme guide of the nation in the Tao, must possess in a pre-eminent degree the *teh* or virtue which the Tao of the Universe bestows, in order that by reigning

well he may convert it into blessings for this world of men. He must, of course, cultivate and develop it by study; he must, in fact, be the most learned man in the world, and at the same time the superior instructor. The same must be the case with his ministers and officers; they all, for the same reason, ought to be paragons of the learned class, the highest laureates of the state-examinations, thoroughly versed in the Classics, imbued with the doctrines and principles of those books—in short, the sagest and most virtuous among men. Unless they possess the Tao and its virtues or blessings for themselves, they cannot guide others in that Way, and thus ensure stability to their rule, and to the throne. Confucius himself, according to the *Lun-yü*, said:

> "By keeping the people in the Tao by means of their virtue, and organising it by means of the laws and rites of social life (*li*) rulers cause it to be modest, and to behave in accordance with rule and order."[1]

Another Classic, the *T'ai hioh*, the short text

[1] Book 2, § 3.

of which is ascribed to Confucius himself, deals exclusively with the duty of rulers to develop their virtue and wisdom by means of study. That text runs as follows:

> "The Tao, acquired by comprehensive study, consists in the manifestation of beneficent virtue (*teh*), which is the fruit of enlightenment; further, it consists in the renovation of the people (by means of that virtue), and in the people's abiding (as a consequence of that renovation) in the condition of the greatest natural goodness (*shen*). When mankind knows itself to be in that condition, it will be settled, and being settled, it can become quiet; being quiet, it can enjoy repose; being in repose, it is able to meditate, and being able to meditate, it may attain desired ends."

In this dictum we recognise the conception of Taoist quiescence leading to power; this quietism is represented as a fruit of the goodness which is bestowed by the Universe on Man, and spontaneously developed among the whole people by the influence of the virtue which the ruler of the

state acquires by comprehensive study. In the light of the Universistic system, the dictum becomes intelligible. The whole Tao of Man, thus Confucius goes on to say, is represented by it:

"Things have a root and a top, an end and a starting-point; he who knows how to practise the premise and conclusions (of the dictum) is near the Tao.

"The ancients, who wished to manifest beneficent virtue created by enlightenment, first of all ruled the State (with that virtue). But in order to rule the State, they first regulated (by means of the same virtue) their families; and in order to rule their families, they previously cultivated themselves,—to this end rectifying their hearts. In order to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in will; and to acquire this sincerity of will, they developed their knowledge to the utmost. Such development of their knowledge consisted in the investigation of things."

The gist of all this is that study is the source of wisdom and excellence of the Ruler. Such excel-

lence naturally involves a perfect organisation of his house or dynasty, and, the organisation being perfect, must bring about a wise government, producing happiness and contentment among the people.

Literary education, rigorously classical, has, accordingly, in all ages, been given in China systematically to heirs-apparent and youthful emperors. Among the emperors there are not a few whose literary attainments were very high. Many have furthered study by the appointment of commissions of scholars for the critical editing and publication of classical, historical, and other standard works, voluminous works having been produced in this way, which represent the highest point that Chinese scholarship has reached. Of the emperors of the present dynasty, the names Khanghi and Khienlung here stand pre-eminent. The largest work which exists in this world, the *Ku kin t'u shu tsih ch'ing*, or *Complete Collection of Illustrations and Literature, ancient and modern*, brought out under Imperial auspices in 1725, and containing nearly the whole wisdom and science of China in systematic arrangement, is the strongest testimony to such imperial enter-

prise, answering as perfectly as possible to the holy order, given to rulers of mankind by Confucius in the *T 'ai hioh*, (see p. 96), that they shall "develop their knowledge to the utmost," and develop that of their ministers and officers at the same time, in order to ensure a perfect Universistic rule.

Since it is a law of the Universe itself, promulgated by the Classics, that the ruler shall excel in Tao or natural virtue, which is developed by learning, it is a natural law also that, conversely, any emperor who has no virtue must, in consequence of his misrule, inevitably lose the protection of the Tao of Heaven, and, therewith, his throne. This dogma is emphatically preached by the Classics. We read in the *Shu king* that,

> "because the hidden virtue of *Shun* became known on high, he was appointed there to occupy the throne. He carefully displayed the five canonical duties, and these were accordingly observed universally."[1]

Confucius said of him:

> "His virtue was that of a Saint and therefore his dignity became that of a Son of

[1] The Book *Shun tien*.

Heaven. . . . Having such great virtue, it could not but be that he should obtain the throne, the riches which were his, his fame, his long life. . . . Therefore, he who is most virtuous will be sure to receive the appointment of Heaven."[1]

The great Yu likewise, according to the *Shu king*, obtained and kept his throne on account of his virtue, and thus founded the Hia dynasty in the twenty-third century B.C. His minister Yih said to him:

"Thy virtue, O emperor, is vast, and everywhere operative; it is that of a saint and a god; it extends to military and civil affairs. Imperial Heaven, who observed it, bestowed on thee the imperial appointment, so that thou obtainedst the entire ownership of all that exists between the four Oceans, and becamest the ruler of all who live under the sky. . . . It was thy virtue that moved Heaven; there is no point, however distant, unto which it does not reach."[2]

[1] *Chung yung*, XVII.

[2] The book *Ta Yü mu*.

And T'ai-kiah, the successor of the founder of the Shang dynasty, was (in 1753 B.C.) addressed by I-yin, his eminent minister and mentor, in the following terms:

"The throne, conferred by Heaven, is a seat of hardship. If you have virtue, nothing but good government will prevail; but if you have none, disorder and rebellion will be rife. Combine your rule with Tao, and in all respects you must prosper.[1]

If an emperor's virtues are constant, they protect his throne; if they are unstable, he loses his nine possessions (provinces). When the sovereigns of the Hia dynasty were no longer able to practise virtue, they offended the gods and oppressed the people. Therefore Imperial Heaven no longer protected them, and its eye wandered over the myriads of regions, to see whether there existed any person to whom it might tender the appointment; with a look of affection it sought a man of virtue of the first order, to make him chief of the gods. None but myself and (your father) T'ang pos-

[1] The book *T'ai-kiah*, III.

sessed such first-rate virtue, and could therefore obtain the enjoyment of Heaven's favour; so it was he who received the glorious appointment from Heaven, became the owner of the people in the nine possessions, and was able to change the calendar of the Hia dynasty. It was not that Heaven had any partiality for our Shang dynasty; it simply sided with the man who possessed virtue of the first order. Nor was it that Shang sought the allegiance of the lower people; the people simply turned to the man of highest virtue. So if your virtue is of the first order, none of your actions will be unsuccessful; but if it is of the second or third order, all your acts will produce misfortune. Happiness and misfortune are not unreasonably forced upon men; but Heaven sends down misfortune or happiness according to the state of their virtue.

"Now, royal heir, you have humbly accepted this appointment—renew your virtue. Have this as your one object from the beginning to the end, and in this wise make a daily renovation; then the officers in charge will all be men of eminent virtue and ability,

and those standing on the right and on the left of your throne will likewise be men of that sort; the ministers will, in relation to what is above them, live for the virtuous sovereign, and in relation to what is below them, they will live for the people."[1]

These paragraphs, which, as classical, have always been holy gospel for emperors, assume that, as the Tao of Heaven bestows its blessings spontaneously, so the blessings resulting from the virtue of the emperor are shed abroad spontaneously. Indeed, Shun was stated by Confucius to have ruled most firmly and beneficently by merely making himself venerable, and then sitting on his throne in inaction or *wu wei* (cf. p. 71). *Wu wei*, accordingly, is a natural appendage to virtue, and so is the power or the almightiness which, as we have seen, is the natural fruit of *wu wei*. We can now understand Confucius when he says:

"He who administers government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which immovably occupies its

[1] The book *Hien yiu yih teh*.

place, and all the stars move respectfully around it."[1]

Since virtue is the fruit of classical or orthodox study, such study practically occupies, in the system of morality and politics, the place of virtue; that is to say, whoever is classically wise is virtuous in the bargain. Or, we may say that orthodox wisdom and virtue coalesce. He who is *very* wise and virtuous is, according to the Classics and the non-classical ancient books, *hien*, and is styled a *kiün tszĕ*, "princely person." And the highest degree of virtue and wisdom (cf. p. 81) is denoted by the words *chen* and *ch'ing*, which mean "reality," as also by the word *shing*, and the man eminent by such perfection is the possessor of holiness or divinity. Holy men were, of course, in the first place those who founded the Tao of Man on Earth, namely the first emperors who are mentioned in what is thought to be history—Fuh-hi, Shen-nung, Hwang-ti, Yao, and Shun, as also Yŭ the Great, who founded the Hia dynasty; indeed they would not have received the throne and empire from Heaven but for their perfection in

[1] *Lun yŭ*, II, 1.

virtue. For the same reason, this qualification was possessed by T'ang, who founded the Shang dynasty (18th century B.C.), and by We and Wu, who, likewise by the grace of Heaven, founded the house of Cheu in the twelfth century B.C. And I-yin, T'ang's mentor, who, according to his own assertion (p. 99), recorded in the *Shu king*, possessed the highest amount of virtue, is a saint. It is unnecessary to say that among all the divine saints of the Tao, Confucius occupies the highest place. Was not he the man who, either himself or by his school, preserved for all generations the Classics, precious bibles of "virtue by wisdom," from which, moreover, the examples and teachings of all other holy men of antiquity may be learned? It is, moreover, emphatically stated in the Classics themselves, by three disciples of his, that he was holy.

> "Master," said Tszĕ-kung, "thou studiest without satiety; this shows thy wisdom; and thou teachest without ever being tired, which shows thy benevolence; wise and benevolent—Master, thou art already a saint!" . . . .

And Yiu-yoh said that

> "a saint stands out from his fellow-men like a

stalk of grass that stands high above the level of the waving field; but from the birth of mankind till now there never has existed one so complete as Confucius."[1]

Tszĕ-szĕ, in his grandiloquent eulogy of the Sage in the *Chung yung*, calls him the *chi shing* or "saint in the highest degree";[2] and this epithet has remained his most common title to this day.

Mencius, who has endowed the world with a voluminous classical book, full of instruction and wisdom of the ancients, stands next to Confucius in the scale of holiness, and is therefore called *Ya shing*, "the second saint." Saints also are the three greatest disciples of Confucius, Yen Hwui, Tseng-tszĕ, and his grandson, Khung Kih or Tszĕ-szĕ, reputed author of the *Chung yung*. The other disciples are either *kiün-tszĕ*, "princely or eminent persons," or *ju*, "scholars."

In ancient books the term *shing*, or "saint," so often denotes the supreme rulers of states that we are compelled to admit that "holy" was an epithet of emperors generally. China itself has

[1] The works of Mencius, the book *Kung-sun Ch'en*, I, 2.
[2] Appendix, 168.

always taken this for granted; indeed, does not the fact that Heaven tolerates and maintains a sovereign on the throne prove that it deems him to be wise and virtuous in the highest degree? "The Son of Heaven," thus we read in the works of Kwan-tszĕ, "is a saint."[1] And in the writings of Hoh Kwan-tszĕ we have this statement: "The man endowed with the highest degree of eminent virtue (*hien*) is the Son of Heaven, and those next to him in such virtue are the three highest ministers."[2]

Up to the present time Heaven always has had a saint in Peking, seated on the throne, to convert the Tao of Heaven into a Tao of Man by means of a government supremely learned and sage, and by means of his private conduct and example, and continual promulgation of his will. His dispositions are called *shing chi* or "holy dispositions," his decrees *shing yu* or "holy decrees."

The holy or perfect man has, of course, a perfect *shen* or soul, that is to say this soul is at least as excellent as the *shen* or gods of which the Yang of the Universe is composed; in other words, he is a god himself.

[1] Book 18, or Chapter 57.

[2] Chapter 10.

This Taoist principle is also a Confucian dogma, explicitly expressed in the Classics. Mencius declared that "When a man is so holy as to be beyond comprehension, he is a god."[1] His divinity and other attributes are the special topic of the *Chung yung*.

"Holiness (reality) is the Tao of Heaven, and the acquisition of holiness is the Tao of Man. Holiness is reached without exertion, and gained without intention; he who thus naturally and smoothly attains the Tao is a saint. The acquisition of holiness consists in choosing what is naturally good (*shen*) and firmly holding it; to this end an extensive study of it should be made, an accurate examination and inquiry, with careful reflection, clear discrimination and earnest practice.

"It is only the highest saint who can transform others by means of his holiness. His superior holiness consists of a Tao which enables him to foreknow. When a dynasty is about to rise and flourish, there are good omens, and when a dynasty is about to perish,

[1] Book *Tsin sin*, II.

spectral evil appears; such things may be discovered by divination through the milfoil or the tortoise, or by sensations in the four limbs; but when such calamitous or felicitous events are imminent, the saint will surely foreknow the good as well as the evil (which they will produce). The highest saint is like a god.

"The saint is self-perfected, and the (universal) Tao is his own Tao. . . . He does not merely perfect himself, but also uses his holiness for the perfection of other beings. His self-perfection is the source of his benevolence, his perfecting of others constitutes his wisdom; and these two qualities are parts of his natural moral constitution (*sing*). He, accordingly, has a Tao which at the same time works outwardly upon others, and inwardly upon himself."[1]

If we consider this Confucian classical page in the light of Taoism, under the inspiration of which it was written, we perceive that it is an accurate description of the Taoist ideal man and

[1] Chapters 20, 24, and 25.

sovereign, who has fully conformed his own Tao or conduct to that of the Universe, either by inaction and mental inertia, or by thorough study, and who uses his Tao to transform others into virtuous men. Such a saint is a seer of the future, being able to fathom the Tao of the Universe, of which he is a divine part, a god. Our apostle of Confucianism then extols the holy ruler's miraculous divine power in these words:

> "Being in this state, he may remain invisible, and yet manifest his influence; he may produce the transformation of others even without any active motion, and accomplish his ends by doing nothing. . . . So great is the Tao of the holy Man! Is it not an ocean of oceans? It produces and nourishes the myriads of beings; like a mountain it raises its top up to the heavens. Immense is its greatness. It embraces the three hundred laws and rites of social life, and the three thousand rules of conduct. . . . Therefore, the 'princely man' sets so great value on making his natural character (*sing*) virtuous,

that he moves in the Tao of inquiry and study."[1]

The books for the study and cultivation of the wisdom and virtue that lead to holiness are the Classics, and we now know why a very high place is occupied among them by the *Chung yung*, and why its author has a place among the four saints of the Confucian school (see p. 103). The book undertakes to point out the discipline which leads to self-perfection; but instead of giving a system of moral principles and duties, to be made effective by instruction, it dismisses us with a single prescription, namely, that the passions must rest, in order to produce a condition called *chung*. This term is generally translated by "the mean," and explained to be a state of equilibrium; but we easily recognise in it the *chung* of the *Tao teh king* and other Taoist works, that is to say, "emptiness" or "dispassion" (see p. 55). Further, according to the same Classic, whenever the passions are aroused, they must be controlled, in order to produce a state of harmony which is called *hwo; chung* and *hwo*, when they prevail in a

[1] Chapters 26 and 27.

perfect state, insure order and blessing throughout the Universe. We thus see that the ethical system of Confucianism has not diverged from the Taoist; it has not created a higher ethical scheme. A method of disciplining the passions is not given by the *Chung yung*. But we find a method mentioned in another Classic, the *Li yun*, by Confucius himself. As we have seen on page 36, this sage stated that the ancient sovereigns effected the discipline among the people by the cultivation of the *li*, the third and principal cardinal virtue, which embraces observance of all the duties imposed by the rules for human life, religious, social, ethical. The strictest observance of these *li* throughout the empire under the auspices of the government has thus been proclaimed to be a holy law to remain in force forever. The special *Li pu*, or "Department of the *li*," which has always been regarded as one of the most important institutions of the State, is to-day considered to be the principal of the six Ministerial Boards. Like the *li* themselves, this Department is an institution of the great system of Universism.

In that same *Li yun* we read that the passions

may be regulated also by the cultivation of various virtues.

"What are the human passions? They are joy, anger, sorrow, fear, liking, disliking, and desire. They exercise their power in Man without cultivation. What is human righteousness? It is affection on the part of the father, submission and devotion (*hiao*) on the part of the son; it is gentleness on the part of the elder brother, brotherly submission on the part of the younger; it is righteousness on the part of the husband, and obedience on the part of the wife; it is kindness on the part of the seniors in the family, and compliance on the part of the juniors; it is benevolence on the part of rulers, and loyalty on the part of their ministers;—these ten virtues constitute man's righteousness. . . . The holy man governs the seven human passions by cultivating the ten virtues which constitute righteousness, by preaching trustfulness, by cultivating harmony, by honouring affection and complaisant courtesy, and by doing away with quarrels and plundering. If, however, he dis-

regards the *li*, wherewith will he rule the passions?"[1]

Finally, another book of the *Li ki*, entitled *Yoh ki* or *Book on Music*, states that the passions should be restrained by means of music.

"The ancient sovereigns regulated the *li* and music, in order that man might thereby restrain his passions. . . . They thereby taught the people to moderate their likes and dislikes, and thus brought them back under the direction of the Tao of Man."[2]

The ruling emperor, being a saint, is a god, his government a divine government. He is even more than an ordinary god, for it is explicitly stated in the *Shu king* that, according to the holy I-yin himself, when Heaven had resolved to destroy the Hia dynasty because of the vices of its rulers, "it affectionately sought an all-virtuous man, to make him chief of the gods" (cf. p. 99). The emperor, accordingly, is considered to this hour by orthodox Confucianism to be above the gods.

[1] Chapter 2. [2] Book *Yoh ki*, 1.

Only two gods can stand above him, namely, Heaven, his father, and Earth, his mother, from whose union he, like every being, was born.

In accordance with this doctrine, it is the emperor who decides which gods are entitled to receive man's worship. It is he who confers ranks and titles upon them, promotes or degrades them, or even entirely divests them of their divinity. Their worship can be suppressed at his pleasure, and he need not fear their vengeance, indeed the power of any mighty god is as naught compared with that of the august Heaven by whose absolute will and patronage the Son reigns supreme over everything which exists below the sky, unless he forfeit Heaven's almighty protection by neglect of his imperial duties. China's chronicles of all ages are full of instances of mandarins who, as bearers of the power of the emperor, destroyed heretical sacrifices (*yin szĕ*), breaking the images, demolishing the temples, and even having the priests beaten with sticks. We read of emperors prescribing such measures in their capitals. Occurrences of this kind are recorded often enough to justify the conclusion that they must have been far from rare in the course of centuries.

The emperor is, on account of his divinity, an object of worship. In the chief city of each province, department, and district, there is an official building with an altar bearing a tablet with this inscription: "The emperor, may he live ten thousand years, ten thousand times ten thousand years." Dragons, the emblem of imperial dignity, are carved in the wood around the inscription. On his birthday and on New Year's day, as also on the day of the winter solstice, he is worshipped on the spot by all the mandarins of the place conjointly, with great solemnity, at a very early hour in the morning. Any intelligent Chinaman will tell you that this worship does not differ from that paid to gods.

Any Son of Heaven must be the very embodiment of the Celestial Tao, just as an eldest son in the ordinary life is the embodiment and continuator of the spirit and will of his father. The title, "Son of the Heaven," which has been borne by the highest sovereign ever since the classical age, thus has its natural explanation in the system of Universism. It implies more than that he reigns by the grace of Heaven:—he reigns by Heaven's absolute will.

We can understand without difficulty the rest

of this religio-political dogma. If the emperor properly performs his Taoist duty by imitating the Tao and conforming to it, and by his virtue, thus obtained, fosters good government, and at the same time secures for his people the happiness that good government naturally brings, then he is almighty, like the Tao itself, enthroned as a mate of Heaven, high above his ministers and people. He is then the medium between the Tao of Heaven and the blessings which it bestows.

"The Tao," wrote Kwan-tszĕ, "is that by which the highest man guides the people. Hence, the virtues and blessings (*teh*) of the Tao of the Universe issue through the ruler; his measures and orders (based on the Tao) he transmits to his ministers, through whom the officers have their tasks imposed on them; and the task of the people then consists in doing their work with due regard to their orders . . . A ruler who has Tao keeps his virtues in the right direction, and governs his people by means of the same, without even mentioning such things as wisdom, power, intelligence, or perspicacity.[1]

[1] Book 10, or Chapter 30.

"He who, wishing to rule the world under heaven, loses the Tao of Heaven, will find it impossible to rule that world; but if he has this Tao, that work is done by him spontaneously.[1]

The people follow him who has the Tao as the hungry follow the food which they see before them, as the cold follow clothes, and the hot the shade. To him who has the Tao the people have recourse; but he who has no Tao is abandoned by the people. Therefore I say, to him from whom the Tao goes away nobody comes, and from him to whom the Tao comes nobody goes away."[2]

The same doctrine is expressed in the *Tao teh king*:

"To him who firmly holds the superior model [the Tao], the whole world goes; for by going to him, it remains beyond the reach of injury, and enjoys general rest and peace.[3]

If a ruler can maintain the Tao, all beings will spontaneously visit him (to offer their subjection and tribute)."[4]

[1] Book 1, or Chapter 2. [2] Book 20, or Chapter 64. [3] § 35. [4] § 32

The *Shu king* contains exhortations, based on this conception, addressed to sovereigns of various periods. Yu the Great was advised, twenty-three centuries before our era, by his minister, "never to act against the Tao, in order to get the praise of the people."[1] And about five centuries later, when the Hia dynasty had lost the throne, T'ang, who founded a new one, was encouraged by his minister with a speech ending thus: "Revere and honour the Tao of Heaven, and thou wilt for all time ensure (to thyself and thy house) the appointment of Heaven."[2] About 1323 years before the birth of Christ, Wu ting was counselled by an excellent minister in these terms: "O intelligent Ruler, reverently act in accordance with the Tao of Heaven."[3] Finally, the great Wu, first sovereign of the Cheu dynasty, was exhorted by his mentor: "Let thy will be in peaceful concord with the Tao, and thy word or orders in accord with it."[4]

Good and stable government, accordingly, is synonymous with the supremacy of the Tao of Heaven upon this earth. In the *Lun yu* and the

[1] Book *Ta Yü mu.*
[2] Book *Chung-hwui kao.*
[3] The book *Yueh-ming*, II.
[4] The book *Lü ngao.*

Chung yung we find such government denoted by the term "Tao in the State or Dynasty," and bad government by "no Tao prevailing in it." This Tao being concentrated in the sovereign, whose throne cannot possibly stand except through his possession and cultivation of it, he ought in the first place to fructify his ministers and officers with it, as heaven fructifies the earth; that is to say, he must give them instructions and orders based on the Tao;—those mandarins then must, by their ministration, spread abroad the blessings which these instructions and orders produce, as earth dispenses to all beings the products of the influence that heaven infuses into it. Then, as certainly as all men do placidly submit to the creating and nourishing operation of heaven and earth, will they submit to the officers and the emperor. This is an immutable principle of the Tao of Man, as immutable as the fact that the Universe consists of Heaven, Earth, and living beings. We find it formulated by Kwan-tszĕ in these words: "The ruler occupies the place of Heaven, the ministers that of the Earth, and the people represent all living beings."[1]

[1] Book 15, or Chapter 45.

These doctrines naturally imply the absolute right of the high Imperial representative of Heaven and its Tao to the implicit obedience and submission of his ministers and of all who live on this earth. No other sovereign can exist in any part of the world but as his subordinate or vassal; even the mightiest potentates in Europe and America have to receive his orders, and to obey them implicitly. If they do not, it is because they do not know the Tao of the Universe, nor that of Man. This highest principle in the philosophy of government in China is as absolute as the authority of Heaven in the Universe, to which the Earth, and all which it bears and produces, absolutely submit.

"Every one," Kwan-tszĕ taught, "should stand in his official position waiting for the orders of the ruling prince; how could any minister or unofficial person individually concentrate his mind upon the formation of private orders? Hence it is that, in acting in obedience to the orders of the ruler, they are not guilty or punishable if thereby they do harm. But if they do something which is not ordained by the ruler,

they deserve the penalty of death, even though they have thereby done something meritorious or useful to him. Thus the inferior people serve the superior lord as an echo follows sound, and ministers serve the ruler as a shadow follows the object; thus the orders of the superior lord are obeyed, and his conduct is imitated by the ministers. This is the Tao of government."[1]

This imperial absolutism is absolutism in the most absolute sense. It expresses itself to this day in these words, that "the Son of Heaven is owner and proprietor of all which exists under the heavens." His ministers and subjects all alike are his slaves; their lives and wealth are his property, and may, accordingly, be confiscated by him at pleasure. In all ages the people have been employed by thousands and millions in forced labour for the construction of government works, —palaces, cities, walls, temples, altars, mausolea. To this hour the system of taxation in China is in the main a system of exaction, generally called by foreigners "squeezing," but less generally understood in its fundamental Taoist legality.

[1] Book 15, or Chapter 45.

The absoluteness of monarchism also has to do with the enormous distance which in all times has been deemed in China to separate the emperor from his ministers, a distance theoretically as enormous as that which separates the heavens from the earth. Whenever ministers, even the highest, appear in the presence of the emperor, or whenever, in any part of the realm, they receive his orders, or have to offer congratulations to him, they all, just like the meanest subject, are bound to perform the highest act of worship that exists in China, and which is worship due to other gods also, namely, three prostrations with nine *khotows*. To relax this principle is to lose the Tao. The distance may, of course, be bridged over by the permission of the absolute monarch himself; but the principle has always prevailed. "Keeping distance in intercourse" (between the ruler and his ministers or subjects), thus we read in the writings of Kwan, "and correctly observing their separation, is natural law; and compliance with natural law and not falling short of obedience to it is Tao."[1]

Thus the Chinese Imperial government presents

[1] Book 1, or Chapter 30.

itself as the highest institution of the Tao of Man, and as the creation of the Order of the World itself—as an instrument tending to keep the human race, by means of sage measures and laws, in the correct Tao or Way in which the Universe moves. We see it erected on the Confucian Classics, which are considered to be the holy books of Universism; and as these books have always been its basis, from the period when the empire was created during the Han dynasty, the inference is that the Chinese Confucian government is a product of Universism.

CHAPTER IV

HOLINESS BY MEANS OF ASCETICISM AND RETIREMENT. PROLONGATION OF LIFE.

A STUDY of the texts, which I have quoted in the two preceding chapters from the ancient Classics and the writings of the early patriarchs of Taoism, necessarily leads us to the conclusion that there has prevailed, in the long pre-Christian period which produced those books, a strong leaning towards stoicism and asceticism. Perfection, holiness, or divinity were, indeed, exclusively obtainable by "dispassion," apathy, willessness, unconcernedness about the pleasures and pains of life, quietism, or *wu-wei*. Does not this savour of retirement from human life, from its cares and pleasures?

On one of the many pages in which Chwang-tszĕ emphasises the necessity of cultivating those Universistic virtues, by means of which Yao and Shun had reached holiness, he mentions wise

doctors, *shi*, "who sought such cultivation by retirement from inhabited places to live and roam by the rivers and seas, in hills and forests."[1] On another page he speaks of "men who enjoy ease without resorting to river-banks and seashores,"[2] which, of course, suggests that there were men who actually did resort to such spots. Taoist recluses or authorities, accordingly, existed in those olden times; but, as Chwang himself explicitly declares, holiness might be obtained without retirement, provided the Tao were truly imitated by making no active display of one's virtue or qualities, personality, and wisdom:

> "The Tao makes no endeavour to stand out above mankind, and so mankind has no reason to raise itself to the Tao (by active effort). Holy men there were, who did not abide in hill-forests; they concealed their virtues, and therefore they needed not to conceal themselves. Those whom the ancients called 'doctors in concealment' did not conceal their persons, but neither did they try to show them; they did not hold back their words, but neither were

[1] Book 5, or Chapter 13.

[2] Book 6, or Chapter 15.

they eager to utter them; they did not hide their wisdom, but neither did they make a display thereof."[1]

Chwang himself led the secluded life which he praised. The great historian, Szĕ-ma Ts'ien, of the second century B.C., writes that:

"King Wei of Ch'u, having heard of the great wisdom and virtue of Chwang Cheu, sent a messenger to him with rich presents, to bring him to his court, under promise that he should receive the dignity of prime minister; but Chwang laughed. 'Sir,' said he, 'have you never seen an ox that has been selected as a victim for the suburban sacrifices? They feed it for years, and deck it with embroidery, that it may be fit to enter the great temple; but when the time of sacrifice has come, it may wish—but in vain—to be a lonely pig. Go, sir, let there be nothing here to soil me. I prefer to make myself comfortable by strolling and playing in a dirty ditch (like such a pig), rather than to live under the tyranny of the

[1] Book 6, or Chapter 15.

owner of a state. To the end of my life I will refuse to take office that I may feel comfortable in the enjoyment of my free will.' "[1]

Chwang supplies us with some interesting particulars of the way in which such devotees practised the Taoist discipline. He tells of one Nan-poh-tszĕ-kwei, who said to Nü-yü, another Taoist:

" 'Sir, you are so old, and yet your complexion is like that of a child; what is the reason of it?' The reply was, 'I have learned the Tao. . . . There was one Poh-liang khi; I carefully took care of him and counselled him, and in three days he was able to place himself beyond this material world. This accomplished, I continued my care of him, and in seven days he could place himself beyond men and beings. This done, nine more days of care sufficed to abstract him from life and existence. And this accomplished, he could discern everything with a perspicacity as clear as daylight. And possessing such perspicacity, he could see himself quite independently (from matter), so that

[1] *Shi ki*, Chapter 63, fo. 5.

there was for him neither past nor present; and freed from these, he could enter into the state which was neither death nor life. He was a living being who did everything and had intercourse with everybody; but as everybody and everything was to him as annihilated, he accomplished everything.' . . .

"On this, Nan-poh-tszĕ-kwei said: 'And yourself, sir, from whom did you learn the Tao?' 'I learned it from the son of Fu-mih; he learned it from the grandson of Loh-sung, who learned it from' " . . . [eight more names].

This paragraph is instructive. To summarise what it states:—Acquisition of the Tao consisted in abstraction of one's self or one's thoughts from the world, from men, and from one's own personality. This process could be effected, even in a tolerably short time, by the instruction of a master; that is to say, by submission to his mind or will controlling or directing the mental state of the pupil; we should say by hypnosis. For the Taoist, fashioned in this manner, there was in the end no being or thing. He lost all thought of the past and

[1] Book 3, or Chapter 6.

the present; forgetful of everything and every being, he was self-absorbed, indifferent even about this life and death of himself and others—he was in a state of "dispassion" and quietism, and therefore almighty.

The stoical character of practical Taoism is depicted by Chwang in the following words:

> "My pupils take the attitude of doing nothing, and all beings will of themselves develop (their goodness). Mortify your bodies; cast out from you the operations of your perceptive senses; forget your relations with other beings; cultivate the greatest similarity with the universal ether; set free your will and deliver your soul (*shen*); be nobody or nothing, and behave as if you had no soul."[1]

All this is occultism or mysticism; but it was actually practised, and influenced the ways and life of men. It was far more than theoretical speculation, indulged in by a few philosophers; else we would be sure to find in Chinese books remains of other systems of thought and behaviour, but

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 23.

there is nothing of the kind. We must perforce assume the existence of one single catholic system, Taoist, embracing the thinking element of ancient China, and a considerable number of men who actually followed its discipline.

Lao-tszĕ speaks of such men in the *Tao teh king*, likewise, under the designation *shi* or doctors.

"Superior doctors, when they hear about the Tao, carry it into practice with zeal. Doctors of the middle quality, when they have been taught it, now keep it, and then lose it. And inferior doctors, when they have heard about it, laugh heartily at it; if it were not laughed at by them, it would not deserve to be considered as the Tao.[1] Men of antiquity, who had the capacity to be doctors, had mysterious intelligence, subtile and exquisite, and so profound as to elude man's comprehension. Though they were beyond man's comprehension, I will make an effort to describe their appearance. They resembled men who have to wade through a (frozen) stream in winter; they were like men living in fear of their

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 41.

neighbours on all sides, or like guests or strangers (timid and passive); evanescent like ice about to melt away; substantial like fresh wood; they were as wide and broad as a valley, vast as a body of water, the slime of which has settled. Who can precipitate his own slime? He who is quiet gradually becomes pure. Who can secure such a condition of quiet? He who spreads his actions over long periods, who spends his life slowly (and thus lengthens it). He who cherishes this method of the Tao, does not desire to be full of himself; yes, if he is not full of himself, he will be devoid of all glory and never renew his actions."[1]

Superficially considered, all this appears like the language of a mystic; yet it is a fairly intelligible description of the man of inaction or dispassion avoiding human society, willess, silent, self-absorbed. We learn from that passage that the use of the term *Tao-shi*, "doctors of the Tao," or "Taoist doctors," by which the devotees of Taoism are generally denoted to this hour, dates from Lao-tszĕ, or may even be older.

[1] *Tao teh king*, §15.

In the *Tao teh king* we find Lao-tszĕ himself portrayed by his own hand as an ascetic of the Tao, despondent, without desires, having no calling or trade, living from hand to mouth, applying his intelligence to nothing, wilfully stupid and ignorant.

"All men indulge in pleasures, such as feasting on fat oxen or going up to a look-out terrace in spring;—I alone am shy, without manifestation (of passions), like an infant that has not yet smiled. I am living at random, as one who has no home. All men have more than they want, but I alone seem to be forgotten and abandoned. My mind is that of an ignoramus—it is vague. The people look bright and intelligent; I alone look dull;—they look full of discrimination; I alone am stupid. I am adrift as on a sea, floating about as if I had no place to rest. All men have their occupations; I alone am too stupid (for any occupation), like a pariah. I alone am different from other men; but I count it an excellent thing to seek nourishment from our mother (the Tao)."[1]

Szĕ-ma Ts'ien also describes Lao-tszĕ as a stoic

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 20.

and a hermit. Confucius travelled to Cheu in order to interrogate Lao-tszĕ about the laws and rites of social life (*li*).

"I have been told," said Lao, "that a good tradesman carefully conceals his possessions, that he may seem to have none, and that a man who is eminent by virtue, even though his virtue is complete, assumes the air of an ignoramus. Put away your pride and your desires, your elegant appearance, and your unbridled will; they are of no advantage to yourself. This is all I have to tell you, Sir. . . .

"Lao-tszĕ cultivated the Tao and its virtues; his school applied itself to self-effacement, refusing to seek fame. . . . He was an eminent man of virtue among those who lived in seclusion."[1]

Although Confucius was evidently no adherent of the Taoist discipline in its rigorous form, and certainly no hermit, yet we are not entitled to admit that he was not a good Taoist. The fact that he piously visited Lao-tszĕ in his retirement

[1] *Shi ki*, Chapter 63, fo. 3.

is significant; moreover, according to two Classics, he explicitly mentioned Taoist retirement and indifferentism with high praise.

"The very wise and virtuous man," said he, "acts and behaves according to the Tao; to abandon its rule of conduct when half-way advanced is impossible for me. The man who is very wise and virtuous is an adherent of the *chung* practice (*i.e.*, he suppresses or regulates his passions, see p. 109); but it is only the holy man who can withdraw from the world and conceal his wisdom without spite. The Tao of the man of great wisdom and virtue extends everywhere, even though he lives in retirement.[1] It exists in concealment, and yet it becomes more and more brilliant day by day, while the Tao of the ordinary man makes display, and thus gradually vanishes day by day. The Tao of the man who is eminently wise and virtuous consists in indifferentism; he is never dissatisfied with it.[2]

"Those who, with earnest faith, wish to learn the Tao of natural goodness, which protects

[1] *Chung yung*, 12 and 13. [2] *Chung yung*, 33.

against death, neither enter a state which is in danger, nor stay in a state where disorder reigns. When Tao prevails in the world under heaven, they show themselves; when there is no Tao, they hide themselves.[1]

"Living in retirement, in order to find out what should be their plan of life: and practising righteousness in order to cause their Tao to exercise its influence everywhere—I have heard these words, but have never seen the men."[2]

After reading these classical passages, we may look with less distrust at a page in Chwang's writings which represents Confucius as a most ardent apostle of Taoism, urging a prominent disciple of his own towards the cultivation of indifferentism about his own person and the things around him, and also to the practice of "inaction" even with regard to the cultivation of the four classical cardinal virtues. Yen Hwui said: "I am making progress, I am no longer thinking of benevolence and righteousness." "This is right," Confucius said, "but it is not yet enough."

[1] *Lun yü*, book 8, § 13. [2] *Lun yü*, book 16, § 11.

Another day he saw Confucius again, and said: "I am progressing, I have ceased to think of laws and rites, of social life, and music." "Very well, but that is not enough."

And another day, when he visited Confucius, he said: "I am progressing; I am sitting forgetful of everything." Confucius now slightly advanced.

> "My limbs," said Yen Hwui, "are hanging down; I have cast out from me the sensations of my perceptive organs; I have separated myself from my material body, and discarded all my wisdom, and so I am now assimilated with the all-pervading (ether); this then is what I thought to be sitting and forgetting everything."

Confucius said:

> "Being now assimilated with it, you are free from all likings; so transformed you have become an extraordinary being, whose wisdom and virtue really are superior to mine; pray allow me to follow you as a pupil."[1]

It is therefore through the Classics themselves that ancient Universistic or Taoist asceticism has

[1] Book 3, or Chapter 6.

entered into Confucianism, and has always maintained its place therein. Such asceticism or mortification on the Universistic principle has been described in the Classics in various forms, that is to say, canonised as a holy religious institution of the State Religion. One instructive example may be quoted here.

There is among the Classics a most interesting Universistic treatise, entitled *Yueh ling*, or "Rescripts for the Months"; it is one of the many books of the *Li ki*. It may be described as a text-book for rulers and their subjects, enabling them, by carefully following its directions, to adapt their conduct to the Tao or Order of the World which is in the main the annual round of Time. It was composed by Lu Puh-wei, the prime minister of Shi Hwang, who evidently used certain documents the age of which cannot be determined. In this curious handbook for the Tao of Man we find the following lines:

> "In the month of midsummer the growth of the days reaches the ultimate point, and the Yin and the Yang commence their annual struggle, so that the principles of death and produc-

tion separate. Men eminent for virtue and wisdom (*kiün-tszĕ*) then fast; they conceal themselves somewhere in their dwellings, where their desires are stilled, where they do nothing with precipitation, and banish music and lust. Nobody may enter there; they must take the smallest possible quantity of savoury food, and have no well-tasting mixtures brought to them. They must put their sexual desires in the background, and set their minds at rest. And all magistrates must stop business, and no longer inflict punishments, in order to establish a state of things in which the Yin can fully develop.[1]

"And in the month of midwinter, the shortening of the days reaches the ultimate point, and from the struggle of the Yin and the Yang the principle of production will germinate. The man of great wisdom and virtue then fasts; he must hide himself somewhere in his dwelling, where his desires are quieted, where he discards all indulgence in music and lust, represses his sexual desires, and gives rest to his body and his natural instincts. It is his wish that all occupations be performed with quietness, in

[1] *Lü-shi ch'un ts'in*, or "Lü's Annuary," book 5, § 1.

order that the restful state of things which the Yang and the Yin are establishing, be awaited."[1]

Chwang-tszĕ boldly refers Taoist asceticism to China's most ancient times. He represents the mythical emperor Hwang-ti as having retired for three months, in order to prepare himself for receiving the Tao from one Kwang Sheng-tszĕ, an ascetic who practised quietism, freedom from mental agitation, deafness and blindness to the material world, and so on. Retirement from the busy world is frequently mentioned in the Classics and in other ancient writings by the terms *tun*, *t'un*, *yih*, and *yin;* and though it is not stated in every case that it was practised on account of the Taoist principle, the influence of this principle can hardly be supposed to have been alien to it. Under the Han dynasty Taoist ascetics reappear in literature in great numbers, and their number does not fall off in the first centuries that follow the reign of that famous House. A great number are described as having lived in the classical age, even in the remote mythical time. Such descriptions may, of course, be mere products of fancy, but it is

[1] *Idem.*, book 11, § 1.

quite possible that they embody embellished traditions and reminiscences of a golden era of Taoist asceticism. Thus we possess a large Taoist hagiography, a description of a Parnassus of saints, many of whom have always had their temples, and are still worshipped. This hagiography contains useful material for the study of ancient religion and philosophy. It enables us to give a reliable picture of the main features and characteristics of ascetic life, that is to say, the manner in which, according to tradition, devout Taoists tried to "gain the Tao," which, as we know, is equivalent to the state of divinity.

The hagiography designates these hermits by terms which express holiness and perfection, and in particular by *sien*. The written form of this word is composed of the character "Man," and "hill" or "mountain," thus denoting their living in remote and unfrequented places. Seeing that the word occurs with great frequency in the writings of the Han dynasty, we may suppose that the men whom it denoted were numerous at that period. I have not found it in the works of Chwang-tszĕ, nor in any of the Classics, nor in the writings of Lu Puh-wei, so that it probably

was not used until the third or second century B.C.

These *sien*, many of whom are, of course, stated to have been gods or *shen*, or *shen sien*, "divine *sien*," are described as living in caverns and dens, in cabins amidst cultivated fields, on seashores and river-banks, even in nests made in trees, familiarising themselves with wild quadrupeds, fishes, and birds, and quietly enjoying the beauties of trees and plants. It is often stated that they cultivated the doctrines and purity of Lao-tszĕ; whence we may conclude that this worthy held the position of their chief patriarch at a very early date. Of many it is related that rulers, even emperors, having heard of their perfection in the Tao, sent for them, to make them their ministers, in order that they might, by the miraculous effect of their "virtue by inaction," perfect the people. As a rule, of course, they refused to come, and preferred to die the death of quietism at a very great age. It is important to note that many are stated to have attracted numerous disciples, so many that the place at the Master's abode came to look like a lively market. Thus, their hermitages, which we find denoted by the term *tsing-sha*, "cottages

for spirituality," were the rudimentary forms of the monasteries or *kwan* which are frequently mentioned, especially in writings of the T'ang dynasty. But any great development of real Taoist monasticism was prevented by the importation of Buddhism.

This religion found its way into the empire of China during the reign of the house of Han, and perhaps even before that time. It was more particularly the Māhayāna form of Buddhism that entered China, *i. e.*, "the great or broad way" to salvation, which claimed to lead all beings whatever, even animals and devils, through several stages of perfection unto the very highest stage of holiness, that of the buddhas or gods of Universal Light, equivalent to absorption in universal Nothingness (*Nirvāna*). This "Broad Way" could be trodden by following a religious discipline, consisting principally of asceticism and self-mortification. Accordingly, it bore a striking resemblance to the "Tao of Man," which, as we know, by annihilating the passions, led to *wu wei* or to that nothingness of action which the Universe itself displays. The two systems perfectly coalesced—they met harmoniously; Buddhism might consider

its road into China to have been paved by Taoism. It adopted the word Tao, which means "way," to denote its own way to salvation; and, on the other hand, Taoism held that Buddhism was preached in India by Lao-tszĕ himself, who journeyed for this purpose to the west and never returned. The fusion was greatly furthered by the universalistic and syncretic spirit of the Māhayāna, which, while imperatively insisting on effort for the salvation of *all* beings, and the increase of means leading to that great end, allotted, with almost perfect tolerance, a place in its system to the Tao of the Taoists.

While this process of fusion was going on, the foreign religion had carried monastic life to a high state of development in the holy land of its founder. As it imported principles, regulations and practices of that life, quite ready-made, development of Taoist seclusion became superfluous; the road to supreme perfection or salvation which led through the Buddhist monasteries, proved, in fact, broad enough for all men. On the other hand, the example of Buddhist monastic life influenced Taoist seclusion. The result has been that Taoist monasteries existed, and still exist side by side with the

Buddhist, but in much smaller numbers. The task of leading mankind to perfection through an ascetic life has devolved, for the most part, on the imported Church of Shakyamuni.

There can be no doubt that the main object of the anchorites of Taoism was, from the very beginning, the cultivation of dispassion, inaction, placidity, taciturnity—those great virtues of the Universe itself, preached by the ancient patriarchs of the Tao, and embracing many others, such as unselfishness, mildness, humility, compliance. This striving for holiness or divinity by cultivation of virtue was greatly encouraged by another ideal aim, namely, prolongation of life on this earth, and its subsequent perpetuation;—thus earthly life might gradually become a transition to actual absorption by the Yang or divinity of the Universe, which itself is eternal. But how is prolongation of life to be effected? The answer is simple: since life consists in the possession of a *shen* or soul, it may be prolonged by perfection of this soul. Such psychical perfection, leading to holiness, is, of course, also a fruit of the cultivation of virtue. The natural conclusion was that virtue conferred longevity.

This is a dogma of very great antiquity. "When the material being, after having attained its maturity," says Lao-tszĕ, "becomes old, it is on account of its *tao*-lessness; whatever is *tao*-less soon comes to an end."[1] Confucius, according to Tai Teh,[2] who wrote about half a century before our era, adhered to this belief, and preached it. "A ruler," he declared, "whenever he acts, practises the Tao, and whenever he does not act practises its laws. Should he not behave in this manner, he will not reach a great age."[3] And we have seen (p. 53) that, according to Kwan-tszĕ, the man who suppresses his passions becomes pure, and thus causes his *shen* to be invigorated continually by a new supply of *shen* matter, obtained from the Yang of the Universe, which is the highest perfection of purity. By this process, his *tsing* or vitality increases; becomes independent of matter in consequence of his quietude —refulgent, intelligent, divine.

Traditions about men who lengthened their lives, and, through cultivation of the Taoist dis-

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 30.
[2] Usually called Ta Tai, "the Greater Tai."
[3] *Ta Tai li ki*, § 81.

cipline, acquired the powers of heaven and earth, existed undoubtedly at a very early date. Chwang wrote in glowing terms of one to whom the mythical Hwangti applied for instruction; his description of the interview is instructive in regard to that discipline and its supposed excellent results.

"Nineteen years had passed since Hwangti had been raised to the dignity of Son of Heaven, and his ordinances were in operation throughout the world under the sky, when he heard of the sage Kwang-ch'ing, who was living on the summit of Mount Khung-tung. He went there to see him. 'I have heard,' said he, 'that you, O sage, are thoroughly acquainted with the Tao of the highest order; I venture to ask you for the vitality (*tsing*), which that Tao confers, for I wish to take the vitality of Heaven and Earth to myself, in order thereby to further the growth of the five cereals for the nourishment of my people. Besides, I wish to have control of the Yin and and the Yang, in order to make these powers suit all living beings. How shall I proceed to accomplish these aims?'"

"And the sage Kwang-ch'ing said:

" 'What you apply for is thorough knowledge of material things, and what you wish to control is the decay and death of beings. Yes, since you have been governing this world, the clouds and vapours descend as rain before they are sufficiently condensed, and (as a consequence) herbs and trees shed their leaves before they have become yellow; the light of the sun and moon shines more and more upon deserts. Your mind is that of a clever man ready of argument; and therefore, is it fit to be instructed in the Tao of the highest order?'

"Hwang-ti withdrew. He gave up the government of the world, built a special dwelling for himself alone, spread in it a mat of plain, bare straw, and lodged in it for three months. Then again he went to see the sage. Kwang-ch'ing was lying down with his head to the south. With deferential submission Hwang-ti moved towards him on his knees, repeatedly bowed low with his head to the ground, and asked: 'I have heard that you, O sage, thoroughly understand the Tao of the

highest kind; I venture to ask you how I should rule my body, in order that it may exist forever.' And Kwang-ch'ing rose at once. 'A good question,' said he; 'come, and I will tell you of the Tao of the highest order.'

" 'Vitality (*tsing*), which the Tao of the highest order confers, is deepest mysteriousness and darkest darkness; its ultimate point is unconsciousness and silence. Be without seeing, without hearing; envelop your own soul in stillness, and your body will spontaneously remain in the correct path; be still, and you are sure to become pure; if you do not subject your body to toil, you do not agitate your vitality, and you may live for ever. If your eyes see nothing and your ears hear nothing, then your mind (or heart) will not be conscious of anything, your *shen* will preserve your body, and your body will live for ever. Take good care of what is within you, and exclude whatever is outside, for perception on a large scale is pernicious. (By those means) I will lead you above the great light, where we shall be at the source of the Yang; I will guide you into the gate of mysterious-

ness and darkness, where we shall arrive at the source of the Yin. Heaven and Earth have control of us; the Yang and the Yin comprise us; therefore, if you carefully preserve your body, your material substance will spontaneously become strong and solid. I maintain in myself the Universe, thus fixing its harmonious effects upon me; and having in this manner cultivated my body for twelve hundred years, my bodily shape has undergone no decay.'

"Hwang-ti twice bowed low with his head to the ground, and said: 'Kwang-ch'ing, sage, you are a heavenly being.' The other said: "Come let me tell you something more. This material body has an endless existence, and yet all men think that it will have an end; its existence is unfathomable, and yet all men think that it has a limit. He who obtains my Tao may, on high, become the Emperor of Heaven, and may here on earth obtain the dignity of a sovereign; but he who fails to obtain my Tao may see the light above him, yet he will become clay under the ground. All beings which now exist are produced from

the earth, and will return to the earth; but I shall enter the gate of the endless, and roam there in the regions of the illimitable. There I will blend my light with that of the sun and moon, and exist as eternally as Heaven and Earth, unconscious of what is near me, and of what is far from me. Men will all be dead, when I alone shall live.' "[1]

This tale is a fable; and yet we cannot refuse to consider that emperor and that wise Taoist as typical specimens of a class of men who, in the time of Chwang-tszĕ, really practised the Universistic discipline which the tale describes. Longevity, followed by absorption by the Universal Tao in the illimitable void, conferring an existence as perpetual as that of Heaven and Earth—this fruit of dispassion and inaction—was their final ideal. It is personified to this day in myth and decorative art, in particular by P'eng-tsu whose figure, which is to be found in almost every collection of curiosities, is best known on account of his forehead, which is many times as high as that of an ordinary man; indeed, the forehead of every old

[1] Book 4, or Chapter 11.

man seems to increase in height by loss of hair. This famous Methusaleh lived from the 23d century B.C. till the sixth. An enormously great age was also reached by Lao-tszĕ, whom fable represents as having lived as early as the 14th century B.C.

The doctrine that virtue is naturally conducive to longevity is also classical, and, therefore, to this day a dogmatic law in the ethical system of Confucianism. It may for this reason be admitted to have at all times exercised a beneficial influence upon morality. The greatest teacher of China himself preached it with emphasis. "Those who have benevolence are long-lived,"[1] said he, and, referring to the great Shun, he said:

> "His virtue was that of a saint. Having such great virtue, it could not be but that he should obtain his throne, his riches, his fame, his longevity."[2]

We know that, according to the Confucian school, virtue, leading to holiness or divinity, should be cultivated by study of the Classics, the

[1] *Lun yŭ*, book 6, § 21. [2] *Chung yung*, 17.

bibles of the Tao of Man. It is, therefore, a doctrine that such study must result in prolongation of life. There can be no question for any intelligent Chinaman that the divinity or *shen*, which the studious or virtuous man possesses, naturally protects him against the devils or *kwei*, which, belonging to the Yin, are the life-destroying agents in the system of the Universe. We perceive immediately that this doctrine perfectly tallies with the teaching of the ancient Taoist patriarchs that the man who has Tao is invulnerable. It has created curious ideas, illustrated and propagated by numerous unwritten tales; and consequently many noteworthy customs have originated from it. A few of these may be mentioned.

Virtuous Taoists can expel mischievous spectres by merely blowing at them. They may dwell comfortably in haunted houses without incurring the slightest injury. Spectres will even slavishly worship them, and humbly implore their compassion and mercy. With remarkable frequency doctors of the Tao are mentioned in Chinese writings as exorcising magicians, and as specialists for the knowledge of the spectral world and its

mysteries. Under their sacerdotal leadership the Taoist religion has, in point of fact, become a system principally devoted to exorcism, practised by means of the *shen* or gods, which in the system of the Universe constitute the powers diametrically opposed to the spectres. It follows that the priestly magic of those men, by means of which they can impel the gods to work against the spectres, enhances the fear and respect which spectres entertain for them. In their hands exorcism is a main part of the white magic that is practised by Universism for the good of Man.

Exorcising magical power is also the common property of the Confucian intellectual class. Every scholar, even all students, nay schoolboys, possess it in a measure corresponding to their ability and literary attainments, in particular to the grade obtained in the state-examinations. Still higher than scholars in the ranks of natural exorcists stand the members of the ruling class. In truth, these are, theoretically, the cream of the intellectuals. Besides, they derive exorcising power from the Son of Heaven, the bearers of whose holiness and almightiness they are in administering a government which rests on the Classics and

the Tao. It is from him, proportionate to their ranks and dignities, that they borrow the authority which he, the highest being on this earth, wields over all spirits that exist. The emperor, of course, is *ex-officio* the greatest natural exorcist of this world; and indeed, several instances of imperial interference to rescue the people, when these were suffering from devils, are recorded even in the standard histories. These books teach us that Sons of Heaven have frequently ordered the mandarins in such harassed regions to offer sacrifices to the devils, and to command them, in the emperor's name, to stop their evil work.

Exorcising charms, if written with carnation ink-pencils of mandarins, are deemed to be extremely powerful. Such pencils are placed upon the sick, in order to cure them, or fastened to their beds, or above their chamber-doors. Servants and underlings of mandarins make money by the sale of such pencils, either directly to the people, or through shopkeepers. Name cards of mandarins, impressions of their seals, and waste letter-covers which bear such impressions, in particular if they are obtained from viceroys and other first-rank dignitaries, or from provincial chief judges,

are likewise highly prized for use in this manner, and are, moreover, burned to ashes and given to patients to drink with water. One seal-impress of this kind is considered indispensable by many at every marriage, to ensure felicity to the couple for all their lives; it should be carried by the bride in her pocket or dress, while she is being transported to the home of her bridegroom. People of small means, unable to buy genuine material of this sort, content themselves with that of teachers or other less distinguished members of the learned class. School-masters are often requested to draw circles of cinnabar ink round diabolical boils and ulcers, wherewith, in dirty China, children in particular are commonly troubled. And finally, people make much use, in similar ways and for similar ends, of old pencils and bits of manuscript of schoolboys, in the comfortable conviction that demons are intimidated by prospective graduates and mandarins, just as much as by complete dignitaries.

If Taoistic virtue, obtained by classical study and learning, is so excellent a defence against devils and their evil work, and, therefore, so good a means to prolong life, it is evident that the classical

writings must be most excellent charms. And it is a fact that the mere presence of a copy, or a fragment, or a leaf of a Classic is a mighty preservative of health and happiness, an excellent medicine for diabolical disease. As early as the Han dynasty, books mention men who protected themselves against danger and misfortune by reciting classical phrases. But also writing and sayings of any kind, provided they be of an orthodox stamp, destroy demons and their influences. Literary men, when alone in the dark, ensure their safety by reciting the Classics. Should babies be restless because of the presence of devils, classical passages do excellent service as lullabies. No wonder that, according to tradition traceable to books two thousand years old, the demons wailed at night, when holy, mythical Ts'ang-kieh invented the wonderful art of writing, by which the Classics have been made and preserved. That art is, as will now have become evident, holy, magical, evil-removing and good-producing.

Immunity from life-destroying influences, insuring prolongation of life, might, as early as many centuries before the Christian era, be obtained also by means less dignified than cultivation of

virtue. The observation that when a man has ceased to breathe his life is extinct, that is to say, his vital soul has left him, was sure to lead to the assimilation of his breath (*khi*) with his soul. And as his soul is a part of the universal dual soul (Yang and Yin) which composes the atmosphere, soul-substance may be drawn into the body by inhalation. In this way vitality may be strengthened and life prolonged.

To this methodical breathing Lao-tszĕ devoted a paragraph in his famous work.

> "Feeding the soul so that one does not die is (acquisition of) the mysterious (celestial breath) and the female (terrestrial breath). And the openings (the mouth and nose), through which these mysterious and female breaths enter, are the root and base of the celestial and terrestrial influences (which exist in man). They ought to be inhaled smoothly and slowly, as if they were to be preserved (in the body)—in using those breaths, no exertion is to be made."[1]

Accordingly, there existed in ancient China a Taoist system of pulmonic gymnastics, by means

[1] *Tao teh king*, § 6.

of which assimilation with the Tao of Heaven and Earth could be secured, and, as a consequence, long life also. We need not then be surprised to read in Chwang's writings that a holy man, so holy as to be proof against water and fire, "respires even to his heels"; his indestructible person is imbued with the ether of the Universe even to its farthest extremities. This great Taoist is the first to give us particulars of the discipline of respiration.

> "Blowing and gasping, sighing and breathing, expelling the old breath and taking in new; passing time like the (dormant) bear, and stretching and twisting (the neck) like a bird—all this merely shows the desire for longevity. This is what doctors who inhale, and the men who nourish their bodies, in order to live as long as P'eng-tsu, are fond of doing."[1]

Such breathing we may suppose was rather hard work. No wonder that the body became dozy like a hibernating bear, for deep inhalation produces drowsiness and lassitude; but this effect

[1] Book 6, or Chapter 15.

passed for the clearest proof that assimilation with the Tao was being produced, for did it not represent the highest qualities of the holy man, inaction, taciturnity, indifference or emptiness and thoughtlessness?

This curious method of obtaining the Tao is mentioned very often in Chinese books of classical and later times; and as, moreover, it was denoted by a variety of terms, we may conclude that it was practised on a very large scale. Of those terms I may mention: *tao yin*, "inhaling"; *lien khi*, "to discipline or refine the breath"; *seh khi*, "to use the breath frugally"; *ch'uh khi*, "to hoard up the breath"; *kin khi*, "to shut up the breath"; *t'un khi*, and *yen khi*, "to swallow or gulp the breath"; *yang shen* or *kioh shen*, "to feed the soul"; *yang hing*, "to feed the body"; *yang shen*, "to foster longevity"; *yang sheng*, "to foster or nourish life"; *yang sing*, "to feed or nurture one's human nature."

At an early date a new clause was added to this article of the Taoist discipline; to wit, that the circulation of the breath or vital spirit should be promoted by healthy bodily exercise.

The great Taoist, Lu Puh-wei (see p. 136), wrote in his *Annuary* the following lines:

"Vital breath is not collected or condensed in the body unless it enters it. Collected in feathered birds, it enables them to fly and soar. Hoarded up in running quadrupeds, it makes them move in all directions. Condensed in pearls and jade, it forms their vital glare. Collected in plants and trees, it produces their foliage and growth. Collected in the holy man, it forms his far-reaching intelligence. . . . But it is motion that prevents streaming water from putrefying, door-pivots from being attacked by insects. Thus it is with the body and its breath. If the body is motionless, the vital spirits do not stream through it, and if they do not do so, the breath is depressed. This depression may settle in the head, and cause a headache and boils; it may settle in the ears, and cause bad hearing and deafness; in the eyes, and cause dimness and blindness; or in the nose, and produce catarrhal obstruction. Settling in the belly, it may cause tension and constipation; settling in the feet, it may be the cause of lameness and weakness. . . . If the vital breath is renewed every day, and the bad breath entirely leaves the body, then man may

reach the age of Heaven itself. Such a man is a saint."[1]

It cannot possibly have escaped the notice of the ancients that strong exertion of the body, as well as little exertion, that is, neglect or exaggeration of inaction or *wu wei*, affects respiration, so that respiration may serve as a regulator of *wu wei*. Nor can they have failed to observe that a similar influence is exercised upon the breath by the passions, on the correct regulation of which acquisition of the Tao is dependent. Tung Chung-shu wrote in the second century B.C.:

"If a man is too full, his breath cannot pervade his body; and if he is too empty, his breath is insufficient. If he is too hot, his breath is too cold; when he works too hard, no breath enters him; when he is too lazy, his breath is discontented; when he is furious, his breath rises high in him; when he is glad, his breath dissolves; when he is sorry, it becomes foolish; when he is afraid, it is agitated. These are ten conditions in which the breath

[1] *Lü-shi ch' uh-to in*, Book 3, § 2 and § 3.

is harmed, all proceeding from lack of 'the mean' (*chung*) and 'harmony' (*hwo*) (see page 109)."[1]

We now understand how the principles of the pulmonary gymnastics could develop into a system practised for centuries, even to the present day. At an early date there appear theories concerning the part of the body round the navel, where the inhaled breath was stored up, to be emitted thence through the arms and legs. This so-called *kwan* or "gate" required long and slow inhalations, which produced the highest degree of health, as they might cause the breath to penetrate into the body even as far as the heels. Much inhalation and little exhalation could bring about a condensation or curdling of the breath in the body, to such an extent that respiration became unnecessary altogether, and that the body could remain motionless like a corpse for months or for years. In such a condition the body existed and lived without being worn out. It then did not need material food at all, which fact of itself proved that it was in a state of divinity. Accordingly, the discipline

[1] *Ch'un-to 'in fan lu*, Book 16, or § 77.

of the breath was connected with abstinence from food, which would train the body to an existence without food as a god lives. We have seen (p. 60) that Chwang-tszĕ, in his vivid description of godly men, stated that they were tender and delicate like virgins and did not eat any of the five cereals, but inhaled wind and drank dew. And Tai Teh quotes from Confucius himself these remarkable words: "He who eats air is a god, and long-lived. He who eats nothing does not die and is a god."[1]

A gradual disconnection of man from his material body by allowing it to emaciate, and his gradual transition to a state exclusively spiritual by absorbing the celestial Yang, of which all *shen* or gods consist—this was the ideal aim of noble minds in the Taoist world. The hagiography has notices of many who, besides breathing methodically, "abstained from cereal food," thus "rendering the body light," nimble and volatile. Many of them made such admirable progress in this art that they could dispense entirely with cereal and other food. We read also that the art of living without food could be furthered by holding in the mouth certain substances, as kernels of jujube

[1] *Ta Tai li ki*, § 81.

fruits, and that one item in the programme of the discipline was to swallow the saliva, because this was considered to be the vital sap, formed by condensation of breath. We hear of many who, probably on account of strange ideas of the same kind, drank urine.

Evidently, the quest of longevity by methodical breathing and fasting was firmly established as a system in the classical period, many centuries before the rise of the house of Han. The Standard History of this dynasty mentions many persons, including statesmen and scholars, who devoted themselves to it. The list opens with Chang Liang, a famous heroic mentor of the founder of the Han dynasty, one of whose descendants, Chang Tao-ling, two centuries later, founded the Taoist Church. Renowned authors of the Han dynasty have devoted their pens to the life-prolonging art, and it is probable that more writings on the subject have been lost than have been preserved. Among those authors there are many to whose names even the most orthodox Confucians would allot a place in the list of faithful votaries of their school.

Especially famous is Hwa T'o, the possessor

of the most wonderful medical and surgical talent that the world has produced. He flourished towards the close of the second century A.D. He could extract stomachs and bowels, wash them, and put them back in their places without the operation having any other effect on the patients than a slight indisposition. Thoroughly learned in several Classics, he understood the art of nurturing his human nature so well that, when near a century old, he had the complexion of a man in the prime of life. . . . He spoke of this art with his disciple Wu P'u in the following terms:

> "The human body needs to work, but it must not work to its utmost capacity. When it is in motion, the food is digested, and the blood circulates through the arteries in all directions, so that no disease can rise. Hence it is that the immortals of ancient days, while performing the inhalation process and passing their time as dormant bears, looking round about like owls, twitched and stretched their loins and limbs, and moved their navel-gates and their joints, in order to hinder the advance of age. I have an art, called the sport of five

animals, namely, a tiger, a stag, a bear, a monkey, and a bird, by which illness can be cured, and which is good for the movements of the feet, when they accompany the process of inhalation. Whenever you feel unwell, stand up and imitate the movements of one of these animals; when then you feel more comfortable and in a perspiration, put rice-powder over your body, and you will feel quite nimble and well, and have appetite."

Wu P'u practised this sport, and when he was more than ninety years old, his hearing was acutè, his eye-sight clear, and his teeth were complete and strong."[1]

It has always been true that even the grandest and most august conceptions lead to frivolity in the hands of Man, when he turns them to selfish use. In China, at an early date the noble way to holiness and immortality, through the cultivation of the virtues of the Universe, degenerated into a ludicrous gymnastic of the lungs, accompanied

[1] The Books of the Later Han Dynasty, Chapter 112 B., fos. 6 and 9.

by some primitive indoor sport, obviously for the purpose of removing the bodily and mental depression and lassitude caused by idle *wu wei* or inaction. Hwa T'o's method of the five beasts is prescribed, elaborated, and practised to this hour, as being the oldest and therefore the best, though many other methods have been invented in the course of the ages. The discipline of the breath became a discipline of the lips and nostrils, which, sometimes with the help of the fingers, were opened and closed methodically, so that the influx and efflux of air might be regulated by the size of the openings. Puffing, inflating the cheeks with air, with several expirations for one inspiration, and *vice versa*, served to nourish the several parts of the body, each according to a stated method. Shutting the ears with the hands, and chattering or grinding the teeth, and hanging by the feet were other features of the system.

There has been much speculation, from the time of the Han dynasty onward, concerning the greatest longevity attainable by the system. A thousand years has been mentioned. There has been much discussion also on the question why a great age is so seldom reached, man's incapacity to subdue his

passions being so great; and on the power which the system can bestow. The system has been highly recommended for the procreation of offspring, as it tended to preserve the sexual desires from tension and exhaustion; and instances are quoted of great Taoists who retained their procreative power up to the age of two hundred years, with faces as youthful as ever.

In Chinese books, the discipline of the breath for the strengthening of the soul or *shen* is regularly recommended for the sick and the weak also, and it is, accordingly, a prominent part of the medical art. Even Hwang-ti, the holy emperor of the 28th century B.C., was an ardent votary of this discipline. Invigoration of the *shen* or vital energy, naturally, according to all medical sages, destroys the influences of devils, which, as we know, are the agents of disease and death in the system of the Universe. The *shen* was also generally invigorated by the swallowing of various substances which were deemed to be imbued with the Yang, of which every *shen* is a part. The discovery of such substances is generally ascribed to Taoists; it was Taoists also who proved their salutary effect by their own longevity. It may then be affirmed

that, from the beginning, the medical art was eminently a Universistic art. Many of its famous practitioners and theorists, whose books are standard works to the present day, were at the same time Taoists, and medicine is now practised generally by the *Tao shi* or Taoist doctors, along with exorcising magic.

The discipline of the breath recommended itself in the first place by its venerable age, and through its learned appearance it was well calculated to overawe the mind. This appearance it had fully assumed in early days. This is proved by a medical work, entitled *Su wen*, which is believed by the Chinese to be the oldest in existence. Ascribed to Hwang-ti and his counsellors, though undoubtedly it was not composed or edited before the Christian era, it may be the transmitter of much Chinese knowledge of a very remote time. It teaches that the Yang and the Yin are composed of five sorts of breath, namely, warmth, dryness, cold, wind, and moisture; and it states that Hwang-ti was told by his wise minister, Khi-poh, that these breaths work in man, and in living beings generally, in various quantitive proportions, thus producing and maintaining their life. The east, said that

worthy, produces wind; the east is assimilated with the element wood, therefore it is wind which creates wood, and also sourness, which is the taste of the east. All these factors affect or rule the human liver, since this latter is assimilated with the east; the liver produces the muscles, and the muscles produce the heart. And the spring is assimilated with the east, and produces every year the *shen* or vital soul of the Universe, together with wood or vegetation; and in Man it produces wisdom or knowledge, and also anger, because this is assimilated with wind. Therefore it is clear that anger injures the liver, and that wind and sourness also have a bad influence upon it. In the same intelligent and intelligible way the great Khi-poh gave combinations for the other cardinal points and the centre of the Universe, making it easy to draw up the following synoptical table of wisdom, Universistic, medical, and philosophical.

East	Spring	Wind	Wood	Sour	Liver	Muscle and Heart	Yellow	Anger
South	Summer	Warmth	Fire	Bitter	Heart	Blood and Spleen	Blue	Joy
Centre	——	Moisture	Earth	Sweet	Spleen	Flesh and Lungs	Red	Thought
West	Autumn	Dryness	Metal	Acrid	Lungs	Skin Hair and Kidneys	White	Sorrow
North	Winter	Cold	Water	Salt	Kidneys	Bones and Marrow	Black	Fear

The operation of the five breaths of the Tao of the Universe upon Man is called "the fivefold rotation," or "the rotation of the breaths." It was always to the Chinese nation a mine of pathological and medical wisdom, and numerous doctors of name and fame have produced books in which they elaborated the system by permutations and combinations of its factors in various ways, with subtile refinements. The system was, of course, highly valued also for its simplicity, since every man of some intelligence was enabled by it to fathom the mysteries of human health in connection with the annual round of the world. Indeed, taking into consideration that the five elements exert either a destructive or a creative influence upon each other, since, *e. g.*, water destroys fire, metal subdues or destroys wood, earth produces wood and so on; considering furthermore that the passions also produce or destroy each other, since, for example, sorrow dissolves anger, joy destroys sorrow, and fear creates sorrow—judicious use of the table and some cabalistic reasoning about its factors, might in every case lead to the discovery of the organs in which the complaint had its seat. This discovery made, handbooks, containing the

wisdom of the ages, suggested plenty of medicines during the operation of which the diet of the patient might be regulated in accordance with the way in which—as the table shows us—the five tastes or flavours correspond with the seasons. Thus treated, and eating in harmony with the annual Order of the Universe, the patient could not help becoming healthy and long-lived. But it seems folly to waste time upon such hocus-pocus masquerading as wisdom, even though it has dominated the medical art of China for all ages.

The gymnastic discipline of the body, which was connected with that of the breath, is called to this day *tso kung*, "working in a sitting attitude." With great subtility it regulates the motions of the hands, fingers, arms and legs during every respiration, and prescribes how the waist shall be twisted and the neck stretched, and how the tongue is to be moved in order to further the secretion of saliva. The attitudes of the body are the erect, the sitting, the prostrate, the creeping, with countless variations. There are special exercises for each viscus, for every season, and for keeping the senses of perception in a healthy state. They may by no means be performed carelessly, for what is

good for one limb or viscus may be extremely injurious for another, and what is salutary in one season of the year may do great harm at other times. The books on the subject are generally illustrated, showing the attitudes desired. These are denoted by names that are of a very fantastical character, or are derived from factors that play a part in the system of Universism.

I have stated (p. 167) that Taoist anchorites also tried to secure prolongation of life, and immunity from death, by swallowing substances which were deemed to be imbued with the Yang of the Universe. In the vegetable kingdom there were many trees which could have an existence of enormous length by reason of passionlessness, inaction, taciturnity, and by their living in all respects in perfect accord with Nature and its annual process. Human reason therefore could not help believing them to be animated by a *shen* of peculiar strength, and even to be depositories of condensed or coagulated soul substance. Besides, there were many plants which were proved by experience to be so highly animated that they could instil new life into the sick who partook of them. In the search for them, Taoists have ran-

sacked forests and mountain slopes for ages. It is they who created and have developed the art of preparing and properly consuming elixirs of life, and have thus richly furnished the pharmacopæia of China with life-giving medical herbs, impressing a Taoistic character on the therapeutic art. The art of acquiring immortality and that of curing the sick naturally coalesced; and they have been inseparably allied up to the present time.

The list of those sovereign vegetable products is long. They are styled *shen yoh*, "drugs which contain *shen*"; *sien yoh*, "drugs of the *sien*"; *ling yoh*, "drugs which possess divine power"; and so forth. At the head of the list stand the pine or fir, and the cypress, the vital strength of which is manifested by their never losing their foliage even in the greatest cold. Their seeds and their resin or sap were especially considered to be concentrations of the vitality of the trees, and were consumed with zeal. Further, the list contains the plum and the pear, and especially the peach; also the cassia, which bestowed immortality upon P'eng Tsu; besides various mushrooms, calamus or sweet-flag, chrysanthemums,

etc. Minerals too, regarded as animated by Nature, were used, especially gold, jade, pearls, mother-of-pearl, cinnabar. Not every individual specimen of such plants was life-giving. It was from a very few only that the *sien* gathered immortalising fruits or seeds, either eating them themselves, or giving them to their favourites among men. Tradition tells also of life-giving trees generously planted by such Genii on behalf of mankind, or owing their wonderful quality to their having been planted by their immortal hands. Such trees were always extremely rare or difficult to reach, growing in very remote mountain recesses or on inaccessible heights, whither Genii had retired from mortal life. Nevertheless, favourites of fortune occasionally found them, and thus could eternalise themselves. The fruits were distinguished from the common sort by their extraordinary size. The best of all *sien*-trees stood in the parks and groves of Si-wang-mu, a mystic queen of the *sien*, living in a paradise in the mysterious West, while many specimens, growing within human reach, were reputedly produced from seeds obtained from that region of bliss, and frequently mentioned and lauded in myth and fable.

That ideal region of felicity, situated in the Kwun-lun mountains, represents the primitive form of a paradise for those who attained holiness and divinity. Tales about its wonders crop up during the Han dynasty. Side by side therewith, traditions appear about paradisical islands in the Pacific Ocean, likewise deemed to be inhabited by *sien*, and full of trees, plants, and fountains all bestowing immortality. Without entering into the particulars of those Elysian regions, we must note the fact that Universism has showed itself capable of inventing places where saints might spend their immortal lives in a condition of perfect felicity. The independent development of this conception was stopped by the introduction of Buddhism, which possessed, likewise in the region of sunset, a paradise of a Buddha, named Amita or Amitabha.

CHAPTER V

THE WORSHIP OF THE UNIVERSE

A RELIGION is mainly characterised by the nature of its gods. Knowing the groundwork of China's Universistic system, we can understand what the beings are that from the very beginning constituted its gods. Naturally they are the various parts of Heaven and Earth, and the principal forces or phenomena which work therein and regulate the *good* fortunes of mankind. They are all animated by the universal Yang, and are accordingly *shen*. The system therefore may be called a polytheistic Naturism or Cosmism. But when the deification of men became common the number of gods increased vastly. Followers of the Universistic discipline gained the Tao and became *shen* or gods, or *shen sien*, "divine immortals," in large numbers every year; and, unless unnoticed or forgotten, they remained objects of worship, and have so remained to this day. But

holy *sien* are not mentioned in the Classics, being evidently fruits of imagination of a somewhat later time (cf. p. 139). They, accordingly, occupy no place in the pantheon of Confucianism; but otherwise the gods of this system are those of Universism,—the only religion of ancient China,—including the *shing jen* or saints of that time, and the souls of emperors, who, as will be remembered, are likewise gods.

Deification of man (anthropotheism) and worship of man (anthropolatry) are main features of the Universistic religion, but doubtless antedate it. Worship of Man after his death may have been the oldest religion of the human race. It certainly prevailed in eastern Asia before the rise of other gods. It is mentioned in the classical and other writings of China so often, and in such detail, that it must have been the core of the ancient faith. It was a natural and logical continuation of the worship of the living—in the first place, of fathers and mothers, the highest authorities in family life according to the Order of the World itself. A strong patriarchal system has always prevailed in China. It places the child under the absolute authority of its father and mother, so that it has

to pay to both the utmost amount of respect, obedience, and subjection, which is called *hiao*. It forbids children ever to withdraw from that authority, whatever their age may be—a law that renders separation from the family stock exceptional. Thus it is that any family after a few generations may develop into a clan, in which the patriarch or the matriarch naturally commands the highest authority, and *hiao* or submissive respect. And, just as naturally, this *hiao* is converted into worship of elders when they are dead,—a worship paid to all, by all the offspring.

In the first place, accordingly, worship of the dead in China is worship of ancestors. It signifies that family ties are by no means broken by death, and that the dead continue to exercise their authority and to afford their protection. The ancestors are the natural patron divinities of the Chinese people, their household gods, protecting against the work of devils, and thus creating felicity. Their worship, being a natural religion, has naturally maintained its place in the system of Universism, the supreme idea of which is man's living in perfect harmony with nature. The pre-eminent position of this worship in the life of the peoples

of the far East is obvious. One readily perceives that it was predestined to coalesce with the Universistic doctrines of the holiness and divinity of Man, and to become an integral part of Universism, as certainly as Man himself and his soul are integral parts of the Universe. At the same time, being mentioned, prescribed, and lauded in the Classics, it is an integral part of the Confucian State Religion, so that the identity of this religion with Taoism once more comes to the foreground.

Since the deification of man consists in his assimilation with the Tao of Heaven, divine men were believed to dwell in the heavenly sphere, round the throne of the highest god, namely, Heaven itself, occurring in the ancient Classics as *Shang-ti* or "Highest Emperor." His throne is the polar star, around which the Universe revolves; it is surrounded by other gods of Nature, the sun and moon, stars and constellations, winds and clouds, thunder and rain,—all, when depicted in human shape, in attitudes of the greatest decorum and stateliness. Indeed, inaction, placidity, stillness, being the qualities of the Order of the World, are also those of the beings who constitute that Order, and of the men who obtained divinity

by making those qualities their own. There is, accordingly, on the Parnassus of Universism no room for rude or energetic action, nor for savagery, war, or any bloody work. But below, in the world inhabited by the human race, there is a large army of *t' ien ping*, "celestial warriors," under the command of thirty-six divine generals, fighting, wherever it is necessary or useful, the *kwei* or devils in behalf of human happiness. They are even summoned by the priests to perform this salutary work at religious feasts and during epidemics, so that they are the principal magical instruments, in sacerdotal hands, for the promotion of human felicity.

The people of China are not addicted to theological study, and have small knowledge of gods. There are works of fiction describing feats of the gods on high and on this earth, as also their discussion of the actions and conduct of rulers and men, and of philosophical and non-philosophical topics, such as may be expected to interest and entertain men of education in their leisure hours. As a rule, however, gods are known by name among the people for no other reason than that they have their temples and religious festivals.

Of many gods the worship is confined within the few existing Taoist monasteries.

Highest among the Taoist gods are the parts and forces of the Universe. Chaos, before it divided itself into the Yang and the Yin, occupies the principal place in the pantheon under the name of Pwan-ku. The deified Yang, the universal warmth and light, is named Tung-wang-kung or "Royal Father of the East," and as such he holds sway in a kind of paradise in the Pacific Ocean. The deified Yin, the universal cold and darkness, is his consort, Si-wang-mu, the "Royal Mother of the West" (see p. 173), who wields the sceptre in the Kwun-lun paradise over myriads of *sien*. A few very worthy emperors of this earth are stated to have visited her, and have even been called upon by her. Naturally, the beauties of her paradise have been enthusiastically described by many authors, with even more detail than any earthly land.

The place which in the ranks of the gods follows that of the Yang and the Yin, was respectfully alloted by theogonists to Lao-tszĕ, the saint who endowed mankind with the *Tao teh king*, the first book that instructed men about immortality and divinity by the discipline of the breath and by the

imitation of the virtues of the Tao. This immortal man lived on earth several times, and even existed before Heaven and Earth separated. He is lord of the gates of the celestial paradise, to which cultivation of the Tao gives access.

As early as the time of the Han dynasty, Taoism, as has been pointed out, had grown to be an actual religion with a pantheon, with doctrines of sanctity, with ethics calculated to reach sanctity, with votaries, hermits and saints, teachers and pupils. We have seen that its votaries organised themselves into religious communities. The process of evolution even transformed the religion in that epoch into a disciplined church. This transformation is inseparably connected with the name of Chang Ling or Chang Tao-ling.

To this day, this saint is described as a miracle-worker of the highest order, as a distiller of elixir of life, as a first-rate exorcist, as a god-man who commanded spirits and gods. He personifies the transformation of Taoist ancient principle and doctrine into a religion with magic, priesthood, and pontificate, under the auspices of Lao-tszĕ himself, who, appearing to him, commissioned him to establish that great organisation. In obedience

to this patriarch, he transmitted his mission to his descendants, who reside to the present day, as legal heads of the Church, in the province of Kiangsi, in the same place in the Kwei-khi district where Chang Ling prepared his elixir of life, and flew up to the azure sky.

History and myth teach us that in the second century of our era this remarkable man founded, in the province of Szĕ-chwen, a semi-clerical state, with a system of taxation, and with a religious discipline, based on self-humiliation before the higher powers, and on confession of sins. This state was afterwards ruled by his son, Chang Heng, of whom history has nothing to tell, and subsequently by his grandson, Chang Lu, of whom history tells much. This priestly potentate extended his sway also over the Shensi province. The legions of devils, the great element in the Order of the Universe as ministers of punishment, played a prominent part in that state. Seclusion and asceticism were greatly encouraged, as were benevolence, and confession of sins before the gods. Bodily punishment was abolished, while in the restriction imposed on the slaughter of animals we may probably discern Buddhist influence.

Besides Chang Lu, two Taoist apostles of the same surname, Chang Siu and Chang Kioh, were engaged in the work of conversion and ecclesiastical organisation. The religious kingdom of Chang Siu was absorbed by that of Chang Lu. The *T'ai p'ing* religion, *i.e.*, that of "Universal Pacification," of which Chang Kioh was the high priest, had a tragic end. In A.D. 184, a perfidious apostate accused him and his Church of plotting rebellion. A bloody persecution broke out immediately, compelling the religionists to rise in self-defence. This the government, of course, called rebellion; it was smothered in streams of blood. Still, as late as the year 207 of our era, the histories of the Han Dynasty make mention of the existence of these so-called Yellow Turbans, a proof of the great tenacity of that religion, and a proof also that the carnage continued for a long time.

The church of Chang Lu in Szĕ chwen and Shensi escaped destruction, for he sagaciously and seasonably submitted himself to the final destroyer of the house of Han, Ts'ao Ts'ao, who founded the Wei dynasty. This occurred in the year 215 of our era. Chang Lu was then endowed

with high titles of honour, and thus became, next to his grandfather, the glorious patriarch of the Chang family. But for him, the pontificate would not exist at this day.

Taoist monastic life was devoted to the silent cultivation of divinity and immortality by means of the ascetic discipline, which I have described, combined with constant propitiation of gods and goddesses by sacrifices and worship, and with exorcism of evil spirits. This monasticism has, however, never assumed large dimensions, nor taken deep root in the country; Buddhist competition was too keen for that. Its development was no less hampered by Confucian enmity, of which the government was the instrument. At this day, only a few Taoist monasteries of considerable size and significance exist. The *tao shi* or Taoist doctors lived in society, in ordinary houses, marrying like other men, and rearing families. They have always been sacerdotal servants of the people, performing, for pecuniary compensation, magical religious ceremonies; indeed, as will be recalled, the great Taoist and Confucian teachers have declared most explicitly that men who possess the Tao possess also miraculous powers, and that

they are gods or *shen* of the same kind as those who constitute the Yang of the Tao.

Of those powers, none is so useful as that by which evil spirits are cast out or destroyed, and whereby, accordingly, mankind is saved from disease, plague, and drought. It is the Taoist doctor or priest who possesses this power in larger or smaller measure, according to his attainments in the Tao. He is therefore a devil-expelling physician; he may quench conflagrations at a distance, stop swollen rivers and inundations, produce fogs and rains; to these and other ends he may command the gods. Magic has always been the central nerve of the Taoist religion, and it has always determined the functions of its priesthood. It runs as a main artery through a most extensive ritualism of ceremonial, aiming at the promotion of human felicity mainly by the destruction of evil spirits, combined with propitiation of gods. It works especially through charms and spells, the power of which is believed to be unlimited. By means of charms and spells gods are ordered to do whatever the priests desire, and demons and their work are dispelled and destroyed; in fact, those magical writings and words express orders from

Lao-tszĕ and other powerful saints or gods. Wherever calamities are to be averted, or felicity is to be established, a temporary altar is erected by the priests, adorned with portraits of a great number of gods, with flowers and incense burners; and sacrificial food and drink are set out thereon. The gods, attracted by the fragrant smoke and the savoury smell, are called down into those portraits by means of charms, which, being burned, reach them through the flames and the smoke; and then by the same magic, connected with invocations and prayers, they are prevailed upon to remove the calamity. Thus it is that the gods of rain and thunder send down fructifying water, needed for agriculture, and stop their showers in seasons of excessive moisture. Thus river-gods are forced to withdraw their destructive floods, and gods of fire are prevailed upon to quench conflagrations. Thus, again, in times of epidemic or drought, the devils which cause these calamities are routed with the help of gods.

This magical cult of the Universe, that is, the cult of the gods who are parts or manifestations of the universal Yang—this religion, sacrificial, exorcising, ritualistic—is practised in temples

which the people have erected by thousands throughout the empire, nominally consecrating each to one god, but filling it with images and altars of many more. Myriads of images thus stud the Chinese Empire, and make it the principal idolatrous and fetish-worshipping country in the world.

For the exercise of their magical religion learned Taoists have, in the course of ages, invented numerous systems. Only a limited number of these are practically in use. The systems differ from one another in the first place according to the gods employed; but among these gods those of thunder and lightning, the devil-destroying instruments of heaven, are always prominent; they generally fight the host of devils in close alliance with the thirty-six generals of the celestial armies which I have mentioned (p. 180). These systems have been carefully printed and published for the benefit of the human race. They were bound up with the great Taoist canon, published under imperial patronage in 1598, which contains probably between three and four thousand volumes. A copy of this enormous compendium—the only one, I believe, outside China—is in the Bibliothèque

Nationale in Paris; but it is in a fragmentary state, which is the more deplorable, seeing that it is highly doubtful whether it will ever be possible to find a complete copy in China.

The conclusion to be drawn from the history of the development of the Taoist religion is that, in spite of its sublime Universistic principle, it has not been able to rise above idolatry, polytheism, polydemonism, and anthropotheism, but has, on the contrary, systematically developed all these branches of the great tree of Asiatic paganism. The same judgment must be pronounced with respect to the branch of Universism which we call Confucianism. It will be remembered that this was created a State Religion by the House of Han, in the same period when the Church of Lao-tszĕ and Chang Ling arose and flourished, and further, that it was based exclusively on the contents of the ancient Classics. Its gods, accordingly, are those whose names and worship are described or mentioned in those holy books; and since these books are Universistic, those gods are parts of the Universe, or powers which manifest themselves in the same.

The Pantheon of Confucianism contains, as the

highest gods, Heaven and Earth, the chief embodiments or representatives of the Yang and the Yin. Heaven is the higher of the two. It is the father of the emperor, who styles himself the Son of Heaven; it is the natural protector of his throne, of his dynasty, and of his house, which would all be inevitably destroyed if, by bad conduct, he should forfeit Heaven's favour. Since the emperor is the medium by which the blessings of Heaven and its Tao are dispensed on Earth (p. 114), it is self-evident that he is also the High Priest of the State Religion.

Heaven bears in this religion its old classical names *T'ien* or "Heaven," and *Ti*, "Emperor," or *Shang-ti*, "Supreme Emperor." The most important sacrifice which is offered to this divinity takes place on the night of the winter solstice, that significant moment in the Order of the World when Heaven's beneficent influence, represented by the Yang, which is light and warmth, begins to grow after having descended to its lowest point. The sacrifice is presented on the *yuen khiu* or "Round Eminence," also known as *t'ien tan* or "Altar of Heaven," which stands to the south of the Tartar City of Peking, the south being in par-

ticular the region of the Yang. This enormous altar, quite open to the sky, is composed of three circular marble terraces of different dimensions, placed one above the other, all provided with marble balustrades, and accessible by stairways, which exactly face the four chief points of the compass. On the north and east sides there are buildings for various purposes. A wide area, partly converted into a park with gigantic trees, lies around this altar, which is the greatest in the world. This area is surrounded by a high wall, affording room for a town of about forty thousand or fifty thousand inhabitants.

On the longest night of the year the emperor proceeds to the altar, escorted by princes, grandees, officers, troops, to the number of many hundred; and many more assemble on the altar, to receive Heaven's son. Everybody is in the richest ceremonial dress. The spectacle in the scanty light of large torches is most imposing. Every magnate, minister, and mandarin has his assigned place on the altar and its terraces, or on the marble pavement which surrounds it. On the upper terrace, a large perpendicular tablet, inscribed "Imperial Heaven, Supreme Emperor," stands in a shrine on

the north side, and faces due south. In two rows, facing east and west, are shrines which contain tablets of the ancestors of the emperor; which fact is significant, because it shows that the Son of Heaven worships Heaven as the oldest procreator of his House. Before each tablet various foods are placed, soup, meat, fish, dates, chestnuts, rice, vegetables, spirits, etc., all conformably to ancient classical precedent and tradition. On the second terrace are tablets for the spirits of the sun, the moon, the Great Bear, the five planets, the twenty-eight principal constellations, the host of the stars, and the gods of winds, clouds, rain and thunder. Before these tablets are dishes and baskets with sacrificial articles. Cows, goats, and swine have been slaughtered for all those offerings; and during the solemnities, a bullock or heifer is burning on a pyre, as a special offering to high Heaven.

The emperor, who has purified himself for the solemnity by fasting, is led up the altar by the southern flight of steps, which on both sides is crowded by dignitaries. Directors of the ceremonies guide him, and loudly proclaim every act or rite which he has to perform. The spirit of Heaven is invited, by means of a hymn accom-

panied by sacred music, to descend and to settle in its tablet. Before the tablet, and subsequently before those of his ancestors, the emperor offers incense, jade, silk, broth, and rice-spirits. He humbly kneels and knocks his forehead against the pavement several times. A grandee reads a prayer in a loud voice, and several officials, appointed for the duty, offer incense, silk, and spirits on the second terrace to the sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, wind and thunder. Finally, the sacrificial gifts are carried away, thrown into furnaces and burned.

This imperial sacrifice is probably the most pompous worship which has ever been paid on earth to Heaven and its several parts. It is also interesting for its remarkable antiquity. It is attended by a large body of musicians and religious dancers, who perform at every significant moment.

In the same vast park there is, to the north of the Round Eminence, another altar of the same form, but of smaller dimensions. It bears a large circular building with high dome or cupola; this is the *ki nien tien* or "Temple where prayers are offered for a good year," that is, for an abundant harvest throughout the empire. Here a solemn

sacrifice is offered by the emperor to Heaven and his ancestors, in the first decade of the first month of the year. To obtain seasonable rains for the crops, a sacrifice is presented in this same building in the first month of the summer to the same tablets, as also to those of rain, thunder, clouds, and winds. This ceremony is repeated if rains do not fall in due time or not copiously enough. These sacrifices are performed mostly by princes or ministers, as proxies of the Son of Heaven.

The ritual for all state sacrifices is similar to that for Heaven. Pomp, show, and offerings vary with the ranks of the gods, as does the number of officials in the suite of the celebrant.

Next to Heaven in the series of state-divinities is Earth, officially called *Heu t'u* or "Empress Earth." Her altar of marble is square, because it is stated in the *Yih king* that the Earth is square. It is open to the sky, and is situated within a vast, walled square park outside the northern wall of Peking, because in the Universistic system the Earth represents the Yin, which is the northern region of cold and darkness. On this altar a solemn sacrifice is offered by the emperor or his proxy on the day of the summer solstice, which is

the moment in the annual revolution of the Tao or Order of the World when the earth is at the height of its animation, owing to the fructifying power of Heaven. Here, too, the tablets of the ancestors of the emperor are placed to the right and left of that of the Earth. On the second terrace sacrifices are on the same occasion offered to the tablets of the principal components of the Earth, viz., the chief mountains, rivers, and seas.

From the fact that the emperor, in performing the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, allots the second place to the tablets of his ancestors, it follows that they stand in the system of the State Religion next to Heaven and Earth in rank. Solemn sacrifices are offered to them by the emperor in the *t'ai miao*, the "Grand Temple" within the palace grounds of the south-east, and at their mausoleums, in temples erected there, one in front of each grave-hill.

Next in rank, in the pantheon of the State, to the imperial ancestors are the *Sié Tsih* or "Gods of the Ground and the Millet or Corn" which the ground produces. These divinities have their common altar, square and open to the sky, in a large park to the west of the Grand Temple. The

emperor sacrifices there in the second month of the spring and autumn, or sends his proxy to perform this high-priestly duty. This vernal sacrifice is accompanied by prayers for the harvest, and the autumnal one by thanksgiving. On the same days a sacrifice is offered on an open altar of the same kind in the chief city of every province, department, and district by the highest local authorities.

These are the so-called *ta szĕ* or "superior sacrifices." Next in rank are those of the second category, the *chung szĕ* or "middle sacrifices." These are presented on various altars or temples erected in or about Peking and in the provinces. The Sun-god has his large walled park with a round, open altar-terrace, outside the main east gate of Peking, to the region of sunrise. The Moon-goddess has her square altar outside the west gate, because the west is the region from which the new moon is born. A sacrifice is offered there to the sun by the emperor or his proxy at sunrise at the astronomical mid-spring, when the days will be longer than the nights, that is to say, when the sun conquers darkness. The Moon receives her sacrifice at sunset on the day of mid-autumn,

autumn being in China's natural philosophy associated with the west, where the new moonlight is born.

The other state-gods of this middle class are the famous men of fabulous antiquity who introduced the Tao among men, thus conferring on them the blessings of civilisation, learning, and ethics; namely:

Shen-nung, the "Divine Husbandman," emperor in the 28th century B.C., who taught people husbandry for the first time. He is worshipped by the emperor in person, or by his proxy, with a sacrifice on an auspicious day in the second month of the spring, when the labours of husbandry are supposed to begin. This rite is performed on an open square altar, in a walled park, situated west of the great Altar of Heaven, and is followed by the well-known classical ceremony, by which the emperor, ploughing with his own hand, inaugurates the husbandry of that year. A similar altar exists in or near the capital of every province, department, and district, and on the same day the highest local authorities offer a sacrifice there, followed by the ploughing ceremony.

Sien-ts'an, the "First Breeder of Silkworms,"

supposed to have been the consort of the emperor Hwang-ti in the 27th century B.C. In the first month of spring the empress, followed by a great train of court ladies, sacrifices to this state-goddess, to whom mankind is indebted for its clothing material, on an altar in the palace park, near the northern corner of the great lake called Peh-hai or north lake.

One hundred and eighty-eight rulers of former dynasties, beginning with the emperors of the oldest mythical period, Fuh-hi, Shen-nung, Hwang-ti, Yao and Shun. They are worshipped on a felicitous day in the month of mid-spring and that of mid-autumn, either by the emperor himself, or by a proxy, in a beautiful temple which stands in the Tartar city, west of the palace. And whenever the Son of Heaven travels past the grave of any of these worthies, he there offers a sacrifice. The aforesaid five emperors of the oldest mythical period, as also the founders of the dynasties of Hia, Shang, and Cheu, with the son and brother of the founder of the last-named house, and Confucius, receive special imperial worship, either from the Son of Heaven himself or from a proxy, in the Ch'wensin hall, situated in the eastern division

of the inner palace. All those worshipped beings are (like all good emperors) saints or gods in the Taoist Confucian sense. It is not strange, therefore, that the holiest man that ever lived, Confucius, is an object of quite particular veneration in the system of the State Religion.

He, his nearest ancestors, and over seventy earlier and later exponents of his doctrine and school have their tablets in a temple in Peking, for solemn worship by the mandarins in the second month of the spring and the autumn. Occasionally, the emperor himself performs these great services in honour of this god, who, having given the Classics to the world, enables him thereby to rule the world in accordance with the Tao. The temple is called *Ta ch'ing tien*, "hall of the most perfect being," or *Wen miao*, "temple of civil government," of which Confucius is the patron-divinity. Such a temple, called by the same name, exists also in the chief city of every province, department, and district; and on the same days the mandarins, under the presidency of the highest, offer a sacrifice in that building.

State-deities are, furthermore, men and women, who, in the course of centuries, have distin-

guished themselves by virtue and learning. Four temples are built for them near every Confucian temple, respectively, for "the faithful, righteous, filial and fraternal"; for "the chaste and filial," namely, widows who refused to remarry and distinguished themselves by devotion to their parents-in-law; for "mandarins of reputation"; and for "wise and virtuous persons who lived in that region." In the spring and autumn, as soon as the sacrifice to Confucius is finished, a sacrifice is presented in those four temples by one of the mandarins assigned to the duty.

Very important gods of the Universistic system are the so-called *T'ien shen*, "Gods of the Sky," that is to say, the Lord of the Clouds, the Lord of Rains, the Lord of Wind, and the Lord of Thunder. These, as mentioned above, are also worshipped at the great sacrifice to Heaven at the winter solstice. A square altar in a walled ground exists in Peking, for their common worship, outside the central south gate of the Tartar city wall. Sacrifices are offered there by officers of the Sacrificial Department to obtain rain, whenever, after the great sacrifice for rain in the *ki nien tien* (see p. 193) no rains descend; as also, to thank those gods

when rain has come; and further, when the rainfall is too heavy or too continuous, and in winter, when snowfall is desired. It may occur that the emperor deems himself obliged to visit this altar in person, in order to offer the sacrifice and to pray for rain.

These solemn ceremonies are, as a rule, followed by a sacrifice on a square altar, which is located west of that of the Sky-gods and devoted to the worship of the so-called *T'i ki* or Earth-gods, who are the chief mountains, seas, and rivers, which (see p. 194) receive sacrifices on the great altar of the Earth at the solstice of the summer. These mountains are ten in number, distinguished as the five *Yoh*, and the five *Chen*. The *Yoh* are:

The *Tung Yoh*, or Eastern *Yoh*, in Shantung; also called the *T'ai Shan* or Greatest Mountain.

The *Si Yoh*, or Western *Yoh*, in Shensi; also named Mount Hwa.

The *Chung Yoh*, or Central *Yoh*, in Honan; also called Mount Sung.

The *Nan Yoh*, or Southern *Yoh*, in Hunan; also called Mount Heng.

The *Peh Yoh*, or Northern *Yoh*, in Chihli; also called Mount Hing.

The *Chen* are the following:

The Eastern, in Shantung, also named Mount I.

The Western, in Shensi, also named Mount Wu.

The Central, in Nganhwui, also named Mount Hwoh.

The Southern, in Chehkiang, also named Mount Hwui-ki.

The Northern, in Shingking, also named Mount I-wu-lu.

Other sacred mountains, objects of state-worship, are five hills and ranges which dominate the site of the mausoleums of the Imperial House, and their *fung shui*. The seas belonging to the *T'i ki* are the oceans on the four sides of the empire or earth; and the rivers are the Hwangho, the Yangtszĕ, the Hwai, and the Tsi. The mountains and streams in the neighbourhood of Peking and elsewhere within the empire are also included in this category of gods.

The Gods of the Sky have a state-temple for their common worship in the chief city of every province, department, and district. This building

serves also for the worship of the mountains, hills, and waters in that subdivision of the empire, and for the worship of the tutelary god of the city-walls. It is an official duty of the local mandarinate, both civil and military, to present there a sacrifice in the month of mid-spring and in that of mid-autumn.

It is also a rule that the emperor shall sacrifice in person to any *Yoh* whenever he visits the region where it is situated, and that, if he travels past a *Chen*, he must send a mandarin thither to present a sacrifice; and at any great river which he has to cross, he must worship the stream with incense at an altar erected for the purpose on the bank.

The official worship of mountains and waters has attained great dimensions in China. On the occurrence of any event which brings good fortune to the dynasty, local officers are despatched to sacrifice to all the *Yoh* and the *Chen*, as also to the following gods: The Long White Mountains in Kirim; the Eastern ocean in Yih, in the department of Lai-cheu-fu in Shantung; the Western sea in Yung-tsi, chief city of P'u-cheu-fu on the Hwangho; the Southern Ocean, at Canton; the Northern, at Shan-hai-kwan, at the bay of Liaotung; the

Sungari in Kirin; the Hwango, in Yung-tsi; the Yangtszĕ, in the capital of Szĕchwen; the river Hwai, in T'ang, in Honan, where it has its sources; and the Tsi in Tsi-yuen in Honan, at its sources. Temples exist there for the purpose, but in the cases of the Western and Northern Ocean, the Hwangho and the Long White Range, the sacrifices are offered at some place where the objects of worship are in sight. The local mandarinate attends such sacrifices, and provides the victims and other sacrificial material; but the incense, the silk and the prayer each delegate brings with him directly from the emperor himself.

In obedience to statutory rescripts for the State Religion, sacrifices are offered, by the local mandarins concerned, in the second month of spring and autumn to no less than eighty-six mountains and rivers within the empire proper, or in the dependencies; all these divinities are State-gods by imperial decree. Volumes might be filled with historical and other details of the official worship of mountains and waters in China, and two able works have been written on this subject.[1]

[1] Chavannes, *Le T'ai-chan*, Paris, 1910. Tschepe, *Der T'ai-schan*, 1906.

In this branch of Nature-worship, East Asia does not yield to any people ancient or modern.

The next god of the pantheon of the State is T'ai sui, "the Great Year," the planet Jupiter, whose revolution round the sun, in about twelve years, is the basis of the chronomantic directions of the almanac, which is annually published by the Son of Heaven in order to instruct the world as to the days that are suitable for the transaction of business. It is, accordingly, by this god that the human race is enabled to adjust its actions to the Tao, which is the course of time, and thus may secure its happiness and prosperity. The temple for the official worship of this planet stands outside the middlemost gate of the south wall of the Tartar city, to the west; two buildings on the left and right of its courtyard contain tablets of the *Yueh tsiang* or "Commanders of the Months." Sacrifices are offered here in the morning of the day before the last day of the year, and on a fortunate day in the first decade of the first month, by mandarins, delegated for this duty. In order to implore the intervention of this great ruler of the Tao of Man, an officer, attended by many others, is sent hither if there is no rain after the great rain-

sacrifice in the summer; this grandee solemnly sends up his prayers, and when rain has come, he presents a thank-offering.

The third section of the State Religion embraces the *kiün szĕ* or "Collective Sacrifices," offered, in the emperor's name, by mandarins, to the following gods:

1. The *Sien i* or "Physicians of the past," patrons of human health, who are the three mythical emperors Fuh-hi, Shen-nung, and Hwang-ti. The *king-hwui-tien* or "hall of illustrious favours," dedicated to their worship, contains the tablets of one Kŭ-mang, a son of Fuh-hi, and of Chuh-yung, Fung-heu and Lih-muh, ministers of Hwang-ti; and in the side galleries of this building are tablets of some thirty mythical and historical physicians.

2. Kwan Yu, a warlike hero of the second and third centuries of our era. It seems that official divine titles were not awarded to this god until the Sung dynasty, and that he was not raised to the dignity of *ti* or emperor before the Wan-lih period (1573–1620); from that time onward his common designation has been Kwan-ti, "emperor Kwan." The lately deposed Manchu dynasty

appointed him its patron of war and military matters. In the second month of spring and autumn, and on the 13th day of the fifth month, his tablet is worshipped together with those of his great-grandfather, grandfather and father, in a temple which stands outside the northern wall of the imperial palace, near the mansion of the military commander. There is also a temple for him in the capital of every province, department, and district.

3. Wen-ch'ang, one or more stars of the Great Bear, known in ancient literature as Szĕ-ming, "director of fate." This stellar god is the patron of classical studies which make learned ministers and officers, whose rule maintains the Tao among mankind. On the third day of the second month, as also on a fortunate day in the second month of the autumn, in the morning, a sacrifice is presented to this god in his temple at Peking; and, since he is considered to have lived on earth as a human being, such worship is also paid to a tablet of his anonymous ancestors, placed in the posterior hall of his temple. On the same dates, this god is worshipped in the capital of each province, department and district.

4. *Peh-kih-kiün*, the "Ruler of the North Pole of Heaven," worshipped on the emperor's birthday in the Hien-yü temple, outside the gate of the northern wall of the palace.

5. *Szĕ-hwo-shen*, "the God who rules Fire," worshipped on the 23d day of the sixth month, in his temple outside the same gate.

6. *P'ao shen* or "Cannon Gods," worshipped on the first day of the ninth month, at an altar near the Lu-keu bridge, by Generals or adjunct Generals of the Manchu forces and the Chinese Army, as also in all the artillery camps by the chief officers.

7. *Ch'ing-hwang- shen*, "Gods of the Walls and Moats," that is, the patron divinities of walled cities and forts throughout the empire. On the emperor's birthday, as also on an auspicious day in the spring, a sacrifice is offered in the temple of the City-god of Peking, which stands in the south-western quarter of the Tartar city, near the wall. In the provinces the state-worship of these gods takes place in the temples of the Sky-gods, although, in almost every walled town, the City-god has a special temple where the people generally worship him with great zeal.

8. *Tung Yoh shen*, the "God of the Eastern Yoh," or Mount T'ai (*see* p. 199). In Peking he has his official temple outside the east gate of the Tartar city, north of the altar of the sun. A sacrifice is offered there on the birthday of the emperor.

9. Four *Lung* or Dragons, Gods of Rain and Water, for whom official temples exist in the environs of Peking, apparently for the regulation of the *fung shui* of the city and the imperial palace. A sacrifice is offered to them all on an auspicious day in the second month of the spring and autumn.

10. *Ma Tsu p'o*, the tutelary goddess of navigation; and the *Ho shen* or River-gods. They are worshipped with a sacrifice, on the same day as the Dragons, in a temple of the imperial parks.

11. To *Heu-t'u shen*, the "God of the Soil," and *Szĕ-kung shen*, the "God of Architecture," sacrifices are offered on altars erected on the site of the construction, whenever any building or digging work is undertaken.

12. *Szĕ-ts'ang shen*, the "Gods of the Storehouses" in Peking and T'ung-cheu, are worshipped on an auspicious day in the spring and autumn.

Three sacrifices are to be offered annually by the authorities throughout the empire, for the repose and refreshment of the souls of the departed in general.

This synopsis of the pantheon reveals the fact that the Confucian State Religion is worship of the Universe, mixed with worship of men, who, however, according to Chinese psychological doctrine, are themselves parts of the Universe. A study of the particulars of its ritual, the location and construction of its altars and temples, and the annual dates of its sacrifices, shows that adaptation to the Universe and to its Course, which is in the main the annual round of Time, has always been its leading principle.

It is a system of idolatry, for it represents the gods, even Heaven and Earth, by wooden tablets inscribed with their titles; and some of them by images in human form. These objects it holds to be inhabited by the gods themselves, especially when, as always occurs at sacrifices, the spirits or *shen* have been formally prayed to or summoned, with or without music, to descend and take up their abode therein.

This State Religion, the most refined system of

Nature-worship that exists, is thoroughly ritualistic. Its ritual, based on the Classics, was codified during the Han dynasty, and taken over by all later houses. It is extremely elaborate, punctual, and solemn; it is the means through which the most ancient religious institutions of China have been preserved to this day. Its object is to influence the Universe by the worship of the gods, who, constituting the Yang of the Universe, bestow happiness on the emperor, his house, and his people. It is, in other words, a system purporting to ensure the good working of the Tao or Universal Order, and thus, naturally, to frustrate the work of the Yin and its devils. It follows that the exercise of this religion is the highest duty of rulers, to whom the Tao has assigned the task of assuring its effectual operation among men. The people are not allowed to take part in the celebration of the State Religion; but they may, and must, erect the altars and temples, and keep them in good repair at their own cost and by their own labour. The only religion officially allowed to the people by the State is the worship of their own ancestors, which, as I have stated, is classical and Confucian.

Yet, as everywhere on earth, religious instincts in China go their own way. Not satisfied with the worship of their ancestors, the people freely indulge in the worship of Confucian deities. In villages and in other localities they have temples for the worship of mountains, streams, rocks, stones, etc. The God of the Earth in particular enjoys much veneration; everywhere the people have temples, chapels or shrines where they invoke and worship him as the god of wealth and agriculture. In the chief cities of the provinces, departments, and districts, the people are used to resort to certain State-temples to worship the gods, especially those of the Walls and Moats and of the Eastern Yoh, who are regarded as rulers of hell.

The people also worship in the temples all kinds of patron divinities whose origin it is often difficult or quite impossible to trace. Most of these are generally thought to have lived as human beings; their worship, accordingly, is a worship of men raised to the rank of gods. There are gods and goddesses for safety in child-bearing; gods who impart riches, or who, bestowing blessing on various professions, are patrons of the callings of

life; in fine, a multitude of deities who bestow every grace and favour because their images are *shing* or holy, or *shen* or *ling*, that is, animated by a *shen*. Their temples are daily frequented by great numbers of pious worshippers and pilgrims. Considerable sums are collected for enlarging, repairing, and decorating these buildings, or for celebrating great religious feasts and sacrifices. The fame of a god may last for centuries. But it may also quickly disappear; a few prayers offered without result will not seldom suffice to sap and destroy his fame. And then, as a result of insuring neglect, image and temple quickly fall into ruin.

This popular religion is practised throughout the empire. The images of gods exist by tens of thousands, the temples by thousands. Almost every temple has idol gods which are of co-ordinate or subordinate rank to the chief god, or which are regarded as his servants. For the mountains, rocks, stones, streams and brooks which the people worship, images in human form are fashioned, to be dedicated to their souls, that these may dwell therein; and temples are erected to them. Horses, camels, goats, and other animals of stone, standing

on old tombs, are very commonly worshipped and invoked; if they have proved to be actively animated or "holy," the people build temples or chapels beside the spot, with or without images. Here then we have idolatry connected with animal worship. Tigers, fishes, serpents, etc., not seldom have temples and shrines. This zoölatry is, of course, connected with the belief in the general animation of the Universe, in consequence of which animals may become human beings, and human beings animals, the two divisions being akin. Trees and other objects are likewise supposed to be living abodes of *shen*, and, therefore, they occupy a rather important place in the popular Universistic religion.

This religion is also practised in private houses, at altars, where, on fixed annual days, sacrifices are presented, while on special occasions priests are engaged to celebrate worship with solemnity and ritualistic pomp.

What chiefly strikes us in this Universistic Idolatry is its materialistic selfishness. Promotion of the material happiness of the world, in the first place that of the reigning dynasty, is its aim and end. We do not find a trace in it of a higher

religious aim. The same spirit of selfishness manifests itself in the practical application of Universism to the governmental system and the social life, to which we must now turn.

CHAPTER VI

CALENDRICAL MODE OF LIFE. CHRONOMETRY. CHRONOMANCY.

IT may now be considered sufficiently demonstrated that the political organisation of the Chinese Empire, including the State Religion, is based on Universism, and on its holy books, the Confucian Classics. In fact, the imperial government is pre-eminently a creation of the Order of the World itself, the instrument tending to keep the human race in the correct Tao by means of sage political measures and laws. It ought, therefore, to be the sum and substance of the Tao of Man, the realiser of the great principle that the conduct of man must be in perfect accord with the Order of the World, lest he lose his happiness, and even his life. The Order of the World is the process of Nature, repeating itself every year. It is the annual course of time. Accordingly, a paramount duty of government is to enable mankind

to live in accordance with that time, so that mankind may secure for itself the blessings which the Universe dispenses in the several seasons, months, and days. This duty is imperative, because the *Shu king* prescribes it. According to this holy book, a saintly minister of a saintly Son of Heaven said, thirty-three centuries ago:

> "Heaven is all-intelligent; holy rulers therefore must make rules of life in connection with the course of time, to which ministers shall adjust their measures, and the directions of which the people follow."[1]

This means that it has been a canonical standard law for emperors in all ages to prescribe calendrical rules of conduct to the official world and the people, in order to secure the domination of Universal Order among men. Calendars of obligatory usages existed at a very early date; a moment's reflection will convince us that they must have existed as long as Taoism itself. The oldest specimen which we possess has been preserved as a part of the *Ta Tai li ki* (*see* p. 144); it is called *Hia siao*

[1] The Book called *Yueh ming*, Part II.

ching, "Small Regulator of the Hia Dynasty," as it professes to be a legacy from the epoch between the 22nd and 19th centuries before our era. It briefly describes the months by mentioning some obvious phenomena that characterise them, or the position of certain stars, which might guide the people in their husbandry and silk-culture, in offering sacrifices, etc. If we strip this document of apparent interpolations of later times and of disquisitions and interpretations, a text remains which is so short that we are compelled to believe it to be a fragment. It contains internal evidence that it was an official document, namely, a decree in reference to the ruler's hunting in the eleventh month.

Of a similar character, but modelled on a much larger scale, are a series of calendrical rescripts in Lü Puh-wei's *Annuary*, from which I have given extracts above (p. 136). It is uncertain whether this statesman made them for his emperor, the great Shi Hwang, or simply copied them from existing documents. Under the title of *Yush ling*, "Rescripts for the Months," they have received a place in the *Li ki*, so that they are classical and accordingly have been, in all ages, paramount

factors in the organisation of the state and of its official religion. Many contain evidence of great antiquity, and for a study of China's ancient times they are of the highest interest. Since there exist excellent translations of the *Li ki* in English and French,[1] the whole world may read and study these rescripts.

In many of them it is not easy or possible to discern any relation with the month for which they were written; but in most cases that relation is quite evident. In the spring they ordain that the garments, the banners and the standards of the Son of Heaven, as also the horses of his carriage must be blue; in the summer they must be red; in autumn white; in winter black; these colours being assimilated with the seasons named.[2] In the first month of the year, which is also the first of the spring, the ruler, escorted by the highest grandees, must inaugurate husbandry by ploughing with his own hand, and thereupon he must issue orders for a proper beginning of this most important occupation of the people. In the spring,

[1] By Legge, in the "Sacred Books of the East," vols. 27 and 28; and by Couvreur, in a special publication.

[2] *See* p. 169.

destruction of animals, birds and even insects is forbidden, because this is the special season of *creation* of life. For the same reason, weapons must in the same month remain unused, except in self-defence; "it is not allowed them to modify the Tao of Heaven, nor to interrupt the natural laws of the Earth, nor to disturb the calendrical rules of conduct of man." For the same reason, no forests or jungle may be burned. And, in the second month of the season of birth and life, sacrifices must be offered to the patron divinities of marriage and child-birth, and these ceremonies are to be attended by the Son of Heaven and his consort in person. At the spring equinox, the Yang and the Yin are equally powerful, day and night being of equal length; and therefore the steelyards, weights, and measures must be adjusted. In the third month, Heaven unfolds its producing energy and the fulness of its munificence; the Son of Heaven, accordingly, opens his granaries and distributes rice among the poor; he also bestows presents on the meritorious and virtuous, and the officers everywhere in his states follow this example. It being also the rainy season, dikes, drains, and canals are to be looked

after and repaired. Measures are taken with respect to silk-culture; and in connection with the approaching heat, certain rites are performed for the purpose of exorcising the devils which cause disease and plague.

The fourth month, the first of the munificent summer season, is naturally assigned to the Son of Heaven for distribution of favours, bounties, rewards, domains and principalities. Nature has not yet begun its work of destruction; therefore nothing is to be demolished by the hand of man, no tree to be cut down. Herbage being in its vigorous growth and imbued with the maximum of vitality or *shen*, which the Yang bestows, it is the proper time to collect animated medicinal plants (see p. 172). In the next month, which contains the longest day, the earth is at the highest degree of its animation by the fructifying power of Heaven; hence at this important moment sacrifices, connected with prayers, are presented to its mountains, streams, and rivers (cf. p. 194). The prohibition of works of demolition and of tree-cutting continues as late as the sixth month; and there is to be no preparation for war, since this would deprive husbandry of indispensable labouring hands.

Such prohibitions are not in force in the next month, the first of autumn, because this season is that of decay and destruction. It is then ordained by the Son of Heaven that soldiers be enlisted, trained and drilled; distribution of justice begins, criminals are punished, prisons repaired. Works which require demolition in any form, such as reparation of houses, buildings, city walls, are now no longer forbidden, but bestowal of favours, dignities, appanages and bounties is strictly interdicted. In the second month of the autumn, people who are in the autumn of life, the old and decrepit, are supplied with food. Now sentences must be revised, and victims selected for the sacrificial worship. At the equinox of autumn, measures and weights are corrected anew. Then the winter is approaching in which Heaven and Earth hide their treasures, and distribute them no longer among men. Man must imitate this phenomenon; he stores up his harvest, and orders to this effect are issued by the officers of government. The natural process of destruction being at the height of intensity in this ninth month, tree-felling and charcoal-making are no longer disallowed, and criminals condemned to die are executed. It is now the

proper time for hunting, and the Son of Heaven indulges in this manly sport at the head of his people, to train them for warfare, for which the season of death is in particular assigned by nature. In the first month of winter fortifications and cities are to be repaired; gates and frontiers are garrisoned, roads are barred and watched, and sacrifices are offered to the protecting spirits of the gates and the territory. Sacrifices are, moreover, presented to the ancestors, and the regulations concerning funeral rites and mourning are revised. In the month of midwinter the people must imitate the hibernating animals, and stay at home, because Earth itself is then in a closed state. And as winter is assimilated with the watery element (cf. page 169), prayers, sustained by sacrifices, are to be addressed to the seas, rivers, sources, lakes, tanks and wells. In the last month of this season, husbandmen, like nature itself, are to prepare themselves for the coming spring, and repair their agricultural implements.

Those rescripts, written by the holy men of antiquity who knew and understood the Tao of the Universe thoroughly, must be promulgated and enforced by the Son of Heaven in a perfectly

correct way; else he causes his people to violate and dislocate the Order of the World by their occupations the whole year round, with the terrible result that the phenomena of Nature will occur in the wrong seasons. So great is the influence of the Tao of the emperor, the greatest god on earth, upon the Tao of the Universe! The consequence of such dislocation of Nature would be fatal to the human race; therefore they are mentioned as a warning at the end of the rescripts for every month. To mention a few:

"If in the first month of the spring the rescripts for the summer are enacted, the rains will not fall in the due seasons, the plants and trees will shed their leaves too soon, and anxiety will prevail in the state. Should the rescripts for autumn be enacted in that month, the people will be visited by great plagues; gales will blow; torrents of rain will fall everywhere; all plants will grow up and ripen simultaneously. And if the rescripts for the winter be enacted, then swollen rivers will cause damage, and snow and frost will be so severe and unstable that no grain will be harvested."

The necessity of administering government with observance of statutory rescripts for seasons and months, has been, from the reign of the House of Han and onward, often set forth by statesmen, and acknowledged by edicts and decrees from founders of dynasties and other emperors. Evidently, domestic and social customs of the people, as well as the institutions of the state, have been bound more and more to fixed annual dates. A mode of life adapted to the annual round of time, or Order of the World, has thus been constructed and considered to be a principal part of the Tao of Man. The literature on this subject is very large. It is compiled in the *Ku kin t'u shu tsih ch'ing*, under the heading "annual actions," in no less than 116 chapters, forming as rich a mine of information as students of the institutions of Chinese life can desire.

If man is to behave and live in exact accordance with the Course of Time, he must possess an exact knowledge of that Course, and a knowledge of the fitness or unfitness of every day for the different businesses and actions of life. It is, accordingly, the cardinal duty of the Son of Heaven, the

supreme guide of mankind in the Tao, to furnish that knowledge. And this god on earth fulfils it by issuing every year an almanac.

This important book bears, officially, the significant title, *Shi hien shu*, "Book of Rules in Connection with the Course of Time." It is published in obedience to the classical rescript mentioned above (page 216):

> "Holy rulers shall make rules connected with the Course of Time, to which the ministers shall adjust their measures, and the directions of which the people shall follow."

The paramount importance of this almanac is evident. By carefully following its rescripts, happiness may be assured for every one, and misfortune avoided. It is a magical instrument, but for which the human world and the dynasty must be ruined. It is self-evident that it must accord perfectly with the sun and moon, the great regulators of time. In fact the calendar is both solar and lunar. It divides the year into twenty-four seasons, defined by the position of the sun, as also into twelve months, with occasionally an inter-

calary month, each beginning when the moon is new. It is a model of exactness, as probably it was in the remote classical age, under the guidance of the Universistic system. If it were incorrect, the Tao of Man would be dislocated from that of the Universe; man's relation with the gods, who constitute the Universal Tao, would thus be deranged. As a consequence, there would no longer be for him any protection on their part, and the demons would predominate; in short, mankind with its emperor would be totally ruined.

There is evidence in the Classics that almanacs or calendars were prepared and published officially in the 24th century before our era, at the very dawn of China's history. When Yao—thus we read in the *Shu king*—occupied the throne,

> "he commanded Hi and Ho to calculate and delineate, for the sake of the adjustment with bright Heaven, [the movements of] the sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets, and respectfully deliver the divisions of time to mankind. . . . The emperor said, 'Hi and Ho, a year exists of 366 days; by means of the intercalary month do you fix the four seasons

and thus perfectly determine the year. Thus regulated in accordance with these determinations, the duties of the various officers and all the occupations of the people will prosper.'"[1]

The father of Szĕ-ma Ts'ien, Szĕ-ma Tan, himself the calendar-maker and annalist of the emperor Wu, of the Han dynasty, clearly states the Taoist character of those measures of that most ancient and greatest imperial paragon:

"Yao instituted the offices of Hi and Ho because, when the divisions of time are clearly determined and measurements to that end were performed with correctness, the Yin and the Yang would operate harmoniously, so that winds and rains would come in the due seasons, in consequence of which luxuriant growth would prevail in the highest degree, and no famine or plague would occur among the people."[2]

In the classical age of Cheu, according to its famous book on the organisation of government, the preparation of the calendar was entrusted to so-called

[1] The Book called *Yao tien*. [2] *Shi ki*, Chapter 26, fo. 3.

"chief annalists or chroniclers, who correctly determined the solar year and the lunar year, in order to regulate the occupations of man and who distributed the calendar among the officers and in the capitals of the provinces; they distributed also the calendars in the feudal kingdoms."[1]

Note the fact, that the redaction of the calendar was, in those ancient times, the work of officers who were at the same time dynastic historiographers. The combination of these functions in the same dignitaries explains the well-known admirable correctness of Chinese historical chronology; and it is clear that this correctness is a valuable fruit of the Taoist demand for a system of chronometry without a flaw.

It has always been not only the Son of Heaven's duty to supply his officers and his people with the almanac, but also his exclusive prerogative. Man's slavish submission to Heaven and its Tao or Way, manifested by his implicit obedience to the almanac, naturally signified his absolute submission to Heaven's only Son and plenipotentiary on Earth; and this son maintained this submission

[1] *Cheu li*, Chapter 26, folios 4 and 5.

to himself and his celestial father by means of the almanac. He did so in his vassal states; there a refusal to respectfully receive and follow this celestial book would have meant open rebellion against the two highest authorities in the Universe, Heaven and its son. Copies were probably in all periods officially sent to all kingdoms that acknowledged the suzerainty of China. According to the governmental statutes of the House of Ming, they were, during the reign of this dynasty, forwarded to Champa, Liu-kiu, and other kingdoms; and it is certainly not on behalf of Chinese colonists only that the now reigning House adjusts its almanacs to the wants of Corea, Annam and Liu-kiu by inserting tables of the moments of sunrise and sunset there, as also the exact beginnings of the twenty-four solar seasons.

In the age of Cheu, the above-mentioned "chief annalists" presided over a board of officers, since the almanac required the labours of many calculators and observers of the sphere. This board was charged also with divination by the observation of extraordinary phenomena, with astrology, and other mystic sciences. It counted among its members

"Observers, who were charged with the definition of the cycles of twelve years, the twelve lunations of every year, the duodenary and denary cycles of days, and the position of the twenty-eight principal constellations. They determined how these factors regulated the order of human occupations, and how, accordingly, the latter should be connected with various parts of the sphere. They also determined the (lowest and the highest) meridian altitude of the sun in winter and summer, and that of the moon in the spring and autumn, in order thus to fix the order of the four seasons."[1]

The board also contained

"Astrologers charged with observation of the heavens, who had to record the alterations which occurred in the sun and moon, and the movements of the stars and planets, as also to observe the deviations from the ordinary condition of things, occurring in the world below, and thence to deduce good or bad fortune."[2]

[1] *Cheu li*, Chapter 26, fos. 13 and 16.
[2] *Op. et cop. cit.*, fo. 18.

This board of chronometry and observation of Heaven and Earth passed over into the administrative system of the Han dynasty, and since that time it has ever remained a most important State institution. During the reign of the House of Ming it was called *Khin t' ien kien*, "Board for Adjustment to Heaven"—a name that it bears to this day.

The present State constitution prescribes that a manuscript copy of the almanac shall be prepared by that board every year for the private use of the emperor, and that, besides a Chinese edition, there shall be prepared one in Manchu and one in Mongol. Copies are forwarded at the beginning of the first month of the preceding year, by means of the military post, to the high offices in Peking, and to the lieutenant-governors of the provinces, who have them reprinted for further distribution among the officers, mostly in somewhat different size and print, and with omission of certain parts which are superfluous for their jurisdictions, such as the tables of sunrise and sunset in other provinces.

The *Khin t' ien kien* also publishes an almanac, which is based on the movements of the planets

and destined to be the principal basis for fortune-telling in the empire. It is also charged with the selection of auspicious days and hours for the performance of sacrifices of the State Religion and other official rites, including imperial audiences, marriages, burials, etc. All matters bearing on divination in general are entrusted to it. In accordance with its various functions, it is divided into three offices. That for the almanac is called *shi hien kho*, "Bureau for rules in connection with the course of time." It is presided over by two Manchu and two Mongol dignitaries, who bear the significant title of *wu kwan ching*, "directors of the five ruling powers," which are the four seasons, and the earth, on which the influences of the seasons converge. Subordinate to these grandees is a "Director for the ruling power of spring," and four officers, similarly titled, for the three other seasons and the centre; they are all Chinese. There also belongs to this office a Chinese "Secretary for the five ruling powers," with twenty-two doctors, and so on.

The function of the almanac is also chronomantic, that is to say, it states for which principal

businesses of human life the different days of the year are fit or unfit. It thereby points out how a man can obey the great law of the Tao of Man, that he shall make his actions and conduct conform to the Order of the World, which is the process of Time; and since, but for his humble submission to that law, he suffers misfortune and even total ruin, the chronomantic directions of the almanac are of a material importance which it is not possible to overrate. Virtually, the almanac is the pedestal of the prosperity of the government and the people; nay, it is the pedestal of their very existence.

Its chronomantic function rests, of course, upon the elementary principles of Universism. The world is a living organism, the Order or process of which, called Tao, is the yearly work of the innumerable *shen* or gods that constitute its soul, which is called Yang. This Order is the process of Time, producing all changes in growth and decay. As a consequence, the various subdivisions of Time, created by the great Process itself, as the years, the solar seasons, the days, the lunations are nothing else than *shen* or gods.

This deification of the divisions of Time, naturally resulting from the divinity of the Tao, has

actually become a deification of the terms by which those divisions are denoted. From the remote past, the years, months, and days have been defined by means of two unalterable rows of characters. One row consists of ten so-called *kan* or "stems," and the other of twelve *ki* or "branches." These rows are combined into a cylce of sixty biliteral terms, simply by starting them afresh immediately after they have been gone through; and this cycle has been used for at least two thousand years to count, in a perpetual rotation, the years, months, and days, each of these chronometrical factors being denominated by a binominal. These factors accordingly constitute which fate, the Order of the Universe, or Time itself, directs.

The chronomantic science of China, of which the almanac is the perfect and most precious fruit, may, accordingly, be defined as a cabalism expressed in these chronometrical figures. It is combined with manipulations of numbers which, on classical authority, are alleged to be significant. The *Yih king* for instance, each word of which is sterling dogma, has declared that the odd numbers are dominated by Heaven or the Yang, and the even by Earth or the Yin:

"To Heaven belong the numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9; to earth belong the numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. There are then five celestial and five terrestrial numbers; these rows of five operate upon each other, and each number has one with which it corresponds. The sum of the celestial numbers is twenty-five, and that of the terrestrial numbers is thirty, and their sum is fifty-five. It is in accordance with these factors that the processes of the Universe are effected, and the *kwei* and the *shen* do their work."[1]

However, the main materials, from which the definitions of the almanac about auspicious or injurious days are drawn up, are calculations, writings, and statements of wise men of bygone ages, transmitted during two thousand years or more, for the greater part merely dictatorial or assertive, defying explanation and criticism. The absolute reliability and perfection of the almanac is conclusively settled by the fact that it has its origin every year in the divine government of the Son of Heaven, the perfect Taoist, possessor of the highest and limitless wisdom which Taoist

[1] The Appendix called *Hi-ts'ze*.

perfection bestows, who, moreover, is infallible, since he is inspired by his heavenly father, by whose decree he reigns.

We look on this chronomantic pseudo-science as an absurdity; but, certainly, we can understand why the almanac has ever been an object of the greatest concern for the Imperial Throne, and why every annual distribution is conducted with solemn pomp.

On the first day of the tenth month, at early dawn, a procession, opened by a band of musicians of the Board of Music, is formed in the hall of the *Khin t' ien kien*. The high directors, in full court dress, come forth, accompanied by their subordinate officers, and reverently place the copies made for the emperor and his consorts in a baldachin, which is adorned with dragons, the symbol of imperial dignity; then they perform three prostrations and nine *khotows*, the humblest Chinese form of worship. After this, they deposit the almanacs which are to be delivered to the princes of the blood and to the high ministers in eight baldachins, richly ornamented; but they omit the prostrations. Finally, the copies for the civil and military authorities of the Eight Banners,

the Boards, and other high official bodies, are solemnly arranged on eighty red tables, which stand in the side porticoes of the building.

Carriers, belonging to the Imperial Equipage Department, now transport the baldachins to the palace, marching in a file, with minute observance of the ranks of the grandees for whom the contents are destined. The procession is preceded by a baldachin, in which, to honour the holy books, incense is burning. The procession is completed by the members of the three offices of which the *Khin t' ien kien* consists. When it reaches the southern gate of the central square part of the palace, the copies destined for the emperor are deposited on a yellow table that has been placed on the eastern side of the central passage of this gate. The almanacs which are for the consorts are then laid out upon tables on the west side, and those destined for the princes and ministers upon eight red tables, placed to the east and west.

Now the Directors of the *Khin t' ien kien* carry the copies which are destined for the emperor and the consorts to the next gate due north, and ceremoniously deposit them there upon two yellow tables. The Directors make three prostrations

and nine *khotows*, upon which some officers of the Imperial Household Department, who belong to the Office for Court Ritual, bring the almanacs to the chief gate of the private part of the palace and to the gate of the harem, where they are delivered to eunuchs, through whom they reach the emperor, the empress-dowager, and the imperial consorts.

By this ceremony, which is called "respectful presentation of the calends," the emperor enters into the possession of a manuscript almanac in Chinese and another in Manchu destined exclusively for his own august eyes, besides a certain number of printed copies in Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese, and some planetary almanacs in Manchu and Chinese. The cover of each copy is of silk of the imperial yellow colour, with gold inscriptions. The empress and the other consorts each receive five printed copies.

The almanacs which are left on the red tables, in the south gate of the palace, are in Chinese and Manchu if destined for the princes; but those which are for the ministers are either in Chinese, Manchu or Mongol, according to their respective countries. Their covers are of red

silk. These magnates and grandees now assemble at this gate, every one in court dress, and with a cortège of subordinate officers. Before the supremacy over Corea was ceded to Japan, certain officers of the Board for the *Li* conducted the minister of that country with his *attachés* to the spot, in the official vestment of their nation. The whole assembly of dignitaries wait decorously and respectfully on both sides, under the outer porticoes, arranged according to their ranks, until ushers of the high Court of State Ceremonial order them to step forward. They then take up a position on both sides of the central gateway, and are ordered by the ushers to kneel down. All obey as one man, and in this attitude humbly listen to the promulgation of a brief imperial decree, which, on the order of the usher, an officer of the same Court recites: "The almanac of the year So-and-so shall be distributed among the state servants for further promulgation throughout the Empire." Now all manifest their submissive respect for this manifestation of the imperial will by making, at the order of the ushers, three prostrations and nine *khotows*. Officers of the *Khin t' ien kien* and the Board for the *Li* then solemnly take the almanacs

from the red table and hand them to the princes and ministers, who receive them kneeling, both hands raised to the height of the eyebrows. The Corean minister had to accept his copy after three prostrations and nine *khotows*, and to take it to his country, where his king had to receive it in full royal garb, for reproduction and ceremonious distribution among his state servants.

The civil and military officers of the central government, for whom almanacs were laid out on eighty tables at the gate of the *Khin t' ien kien*, have to repair thither to receive their copies in the same respectful way.

This ceremonious distribution is mentioned in the ancient *Cheu li* by the term "distribution of the calends," and therefore is now officially so called. On the first day of the tenth month, in the morning, it is celebrated also in each provincial capital, under the name of "reception of the calends." The reprints, made after the standard models which were received from Peking (see page 231), are placed in a baldachin adorned with imperial dragons, and, escorted by musicians, sent from the mansion of the lieutenant-governor to that of the governor-general, or, if the city is

not the seat of such a dignitary, to that of the governor. Here they are laid out upon tables, while the civil and military officials assemble, all with their suites and in state dress. Ceremonial ushers arrange them with strict observance of their order of rank, the governor-general or the governor with his civil functionaries keeping to the eastern side, and the general with the military officers to the western. Then, simultaneously, on the order of an usher, all perform three prostrations and nine *khotows* towards the north, in worship of the emperor. This done, they receive the almanacs in the same manner as their colleagues at Peking, and retire. The lieutenant-governor delivers a number of copies to the Taotais of the province, who have to forward them to the capitals of the departments and districts in their respective jurisdiction or circuit; and the military commanders receive a certain number for distribution among the military posts. In all those places they must be distributed as soon as possible, with a ceremonial analogous to that observed in the provincial capital.

There is no doubt that the official distribution of the almanacs has always taken place in a similar

solemn manner, and it is very probable that the emperor's sole right to supply the people with the book was always protected by severe laws. In the Code of the Ming dynasty and that of the present house private fabrication of imperial almanacs is, like the counterfeiting of officially sealed documents, forbidden under penalty of decapitation; accessories in such a crime are punished with a hundred blows with long sticks and perpetual banishment to a distance of three thousand miles. In virtue of an imperial decree of 1816, those punishments are to be inflicted upon those also who make private almanacs and calendars previous to the official "distribution of the calends." Publication of such almanacs and calendars is for the rest allowed; and in fact they are made everywhere, and sold at very moderate prices. In order to encourage private enterprise in this line, the *Khin t' ien kien* also publishes an "imperial book for ten thousand years," which gives the calendar for many years in advance, but with the omission of the chronomantic part.

Since the almanac is the mighty magical instrument by means of which the Tao of Heaven bestows its blessings on the whole human race,

it suppresses and removes evil. Since evil is caused by demons, the inference is that almanacs are exorcising instruments of the first order. In this respect they stand exactly on a par with the Classics (cf. page 154). No house in China may lack a copy of an almanac, or its title-page in miniature, sold as a charm, in accordance with the *pars pro toto* principle, by vendors of sham paper money, booksellers or stationers. This charm is hidden in beds, corners, cupboards, and similar places, or worn in the clothes; and no bride who is passing from the home of her parents to that of her bridegroom may omit a specimen among the exorcising and propitious objects with which her pocket is filled. When the year has passed, the old almanacs are useful as exorcising medicine. Against fever, ascribed to devils, pills are made from ashes of almanacs, preferably burned at the midday hour of the summer solstice, when the Yang is at the very height of its annual beneficial power and influence.

Thus Chinese chronomancy is a holy science, cultivated on behalf of the whole human world by the celestial government of the Son of Heaven, because on its proper cultivation and application

the happiness and the existence of the world depend. It directs the life of the Chinese nation in all its parts by means of the almanac. In that magical Universistic book the propitious days are named on which to contract marriages, or remove to another house, or cut clothes; days on which one may begin works of repair of houses, temples, ships, or commence house-building by laying the upper beam of the roof in its place by means of a scaffolding, or putting up the first pillar; days on which one may safely undertake earth works, bathe, open shops, have meetings with relations and friends, receive money; days on which one may sow or reap, send one's children to school for the first time, bury the dead, etc., etc. To no man of intelligence will it occur to perform such actions on other days, unless he believes himself able, by means of cunning artifices of a childish character, to transfer the evil effects of such a transgression against the Tao upon some animal, or upon such vermin as cockroaches, mice, bugs.

But the application of chronomancy extends far beyond the almanac. Whenever a man wishes to undertake a business of importance, he will be wise to do it at a time indicated by chronological

terms that accord favourably with those which express the year, month, day, and even the hour of his birth. For among the "ten stems" and the "twelve branches" there are some which harmonise with one another, and others which collide, so that they increase or destroy one another's influences; and no success is obtainable unless there be a favourable coalition between those factors. It is, moreover, a standard law in chronomantical science that the chronometrical characters of a man's birth, which may be called his horoscope, determine his fate for ever, in point of fact *are* his fate, so that it is not prudent to allow an action to affect them injuriously by performing it in a year, month, day or hour which are marked by so-called contrary characters. It is evident that there is room here for endless speculation, as those characters may be combined and shifted in several manners, and their propitious or injurious qualities may be defined differently. Moreover, new factors of calculation may be introduced by taking into consideration that the "stems" and "branches" denote also points of the compass and their influences, and, in consequence, the five elements or planets. And in addition, the influences

of the chronometrical characters are modified by twelve animals, which, arranged in an unalterable order, have been assimilated for about two thousand years, in perpetual rotation, with the years, months, days, and hours. These animals are the rat, the ox, the tiger, the hare, the dragon, the serpent, the horse, the goat, the monkey, the cock, the dog, and the pig.

Such speculative work is exclusively the business of professional diviners, who pretend to belong to the literary or learned class. Undoubtedly they are well paid by their customers, seeing that many hundred thousands devote themselves to this profession. They are never without business, and accordingly tyrannise over human life in every way. And yet the chronomantical science or art, which bears its refutation on its face, is only a part of the great all-dominating science which teaches and compels man to live and act in accord with the Universe, captivating his mind, shackling his thoughts and movements, and destined to do so until true science, the germs of which are now gradually spreading over China, shall undermine and destroy its sway.

CHAPTER VII

DIVINATORY OBSERVATION OF THE UNIVERSE

THE cardinal principle of human life in Eastern Asia, which dictates that man shall behave in conformity with the Tao or Order of the Universe, has compelled him for thousands of years to keep his eyes fixed upon the Universe, in order to learn whether extraordinary phenomena of any kind indicated some derangement in the Tao of Man, causing the Tao of the Universe to be shocked, offended, and deranged, so that calamities might be the consequence.

And, as it has always been the highest and holiest duty of the Sons of Heaven to keep the Tao of Man in a perfect state by their system of government, they always have had in their service learned men charged with the observation and interpretation of phenomena. Thus, proper measures might be taken to avert threatened calamities. These measures looked chiefly to the

improvement of the Tao of Man by improvement of the government.

Such official observation of nature was always considered to be of statutory obligation, because it is mentioned in the *Shu king* as an institution of the holy ancients. In one of the books of this Classic, the *Hung fan* or "Vast Plan," which stands pre-eminent among manuals for government, because it was given by Heaven itself to the Great Yŭ as early as the 23d century B.C., the objects of governmental care are set forth; among these there is one, called "a thoughtful utilisation of the various manifestations," namely, in rainfall, sunshine, heat, cold, wind, and the seasons. "When these five phenomena," says this holy book, "come all complete, and each is in its proper order, all plants will grow abundantly and luxuriantly; but should any of them be too abundant, or deficient, calamity will be the consequence."

Augural observation of nature was early established in China as a State institution. It is explicitly stated in the *Cheu li*, that it was the function of certain officers, called Pao-chang, to read from the stars the fate of the subdivisions of the earth, which were deemed to stand under the

influence of the stars; and the fate of the world generally from the sun, moon, and stars. They had to make a special study of Jupiter, and its revolution around the sun, which still remains the foundation of the chronomantic part of the imperial almanac (cf. page 205). They had to consult the clouds for prognostication about rain and drought, abundance and dearth, and the winds about harmony between Heaven and Earth, or about peace and rebellion in the states of the sovereign. The particulars of the system are nowhere described. But from the Standard Histories we learn that it was elaborated during the Han dynasty; and since that age it has been cultivated by the State without interruption, as a standard institution of the highest order, entrusted to the wisdom of special officers, and ultimately to that of the same body, called *Khin t' ien kien*, which is charged with the official chronometry and chronomancy.

The literature on the official augural observation of nature is vast. It is for the greater part combined with official historiography, so that it is possible for any one who can read the Standard Histories to draw the rough outlines of the

system, and depict the part which it has always performed.

Phenomena were observed principally, and perhaps exclusively, to ascertain whether government was defective, that is to say, straying from the Tao, or whether it was good, following the Tao in a proper manner. They were, accordingly, distinguished by the terms *yas i* or *yas pien*, "evil-portending deviations from the usual state," and *siang sui*, "propitious tokens." The former were attended to with peculiar care. Indeed, the favourable phenomena might be overlooked without danger, but this was not the case with the bad, as they required serious measures, prescribed by tradition and wisdom, to avert their consequences. Absence of omens always indicated that there were no derangements in the Tao of the Universe and Man, and that the world was therefore safe.

The measures required by ominous phenomena were numerous and various. It was the wisest men who suggested them, the greatest scholars, the highest statesmen; as a rule also the officers of the Board of Observations themselves. Special sacrifices were then offered to divinities of the State Religion, or prayers sent up, either by the

emperor in person, or by mandarins delegated by him. Or the emperor secluded himself, fasted, abstained from speaking, and cleansed himself inwardly and outwardly, or performed acts of humble penitence and confession before Heaven, or before Heaven and Earth, weeping and wailing in company with his magnates and ministers to implore compassion. For, in virtue of his appointment, by the Tao of the Universe itself, to the dignity of highest guide of mankind in the Tao, his personal conduct and the defects of his rule must always be the first causes and reasons of all dangerous derangements in the Order of the World. Amnesties were awarded by him to criminals, in order that the mercy thus displayed might rouse and stimulate that of Heaven. But often the Tao of Man was led back into its right channel by more radical measures, namely, a thorough purification of the official world from bad elements. History tells us of hundreds of ministers and officers dismissed, degraded, imprisoned, and otherwise punished on such occasions, denounced by disparaging memorials and petitions from their rivals and enemies. Censors and dictators were sent to the provinces with plenary authority, to separate the chaff from

the wheat, and to bring about the voluntary retreat from service of hundreds in order to escape a worse fate. Mostly, however, the measures of improvement were mere paper. Admonitions and reprimands were sent by the throne to the official world, either within the palace only, or in the capital, or throughout the provinces, decreeing that all as one man should restore the Tao of Man, and therewith that of the Universe, by improving their rule. Or they were admonished to reconcile the irritated Tao of Heaven by revision of their private conduct, or by abstinence from festive and congratulatory ceremonies; or they were ordered to prohibit the killing of animals in their jurisdictions and delay the execution of criminals, lest life-producing Heaven should continue to feel shocked. And, to facilitate the process of revision, all the officers in the empire were allowed by decree to send to the throne, for private inspection by the emperor, their criticism of the conduct and measures of the Son of Heaven, his court, and his ministers, as also their views and proposals regarding improvement of the government, exemption from punishment for their frankness being unconditionally guaranteed. States-

men and scholars have also, of their own accord, impelled by signs in the Heavens or on the Earth, frequently presented memorials to oppose or to recommend certain measures.

With peculiar zeal and devotion such work of mortification, revision, and improvement was taken in hand when calamities or visitations, announced by portents, had really come. The religious ethics of China, which, as we have seen, are Universistic to the core, here exhibit another of their Universistic phases worthy of a deeper study; but I can do no more than point to its curious, slender basis, namely, the observation of phenomena in themselves perfectly natural, but deemed by minds, not schooled by correct science, to be derangements of nature because of their uncommon or irregular occurrence.

We here encounter the great method by which, in China, the Universe has, in all ages, been led by man himself to overrule the government, in order that the latter might keep itself and the human world, constantly and correctly, in the right path or Tao of the Universe. It is now clear why government in China has always felt itself under the necessity of having a complete know-

ledge of all deviations of nature from its ordinary process, and why, in all ages, the official world has reported them in great numbers from all sides. We read of imperial rescripts regulating its duties in this respect, and of severe prohibitions against concealment of ominous phenomena. On the other hand, many emperors have forbidden the reporting of favourable signs, evidently because they considered the perfectness of their own rule, indicated by such signs, to be a matter of course; or it may be that they questioned the trustworthiness of the reporters, dexterous adulators being numerous in China. Nevertheless, propitious signs are mentioned very often in historical works. They were so great a source of imperial self-satisfaction that they were solemnly reported to the *manes* of the imperial ancestors and ancestresses in the Grand Temple of the palace. Or they were celebrated with stately congratulatory audiences, or with an amnesty, or with distribution of bounties, or with the elevation of all functionaries to a higher rank. The title of the reign of the emperor, which is always fixed with utmost care because it promotes the felicity of his rule, has in such cases been replaced by another alluding to

the augural sign, the sign being thus perpetuated in history. Gold signs have been officially classified according to their value, for instance, as superior, mediocre, and inferior ones. Especially esteemed were so-called *shen kwang*, "divine glimpses," mysterious appearances produced, even in the daytime, by the presence of gods.

That systematic observation of rare and extraordinary phenomena in heaven and on earth, prescribed by the Universistic state policy, has never produced in China a sound study of nature, resulting in correct knowledge of the laws of its mechanism and thus corroding the Universistic religion and the whole moral and mental culture based on it. It has, however, produced long records of phenomena, and calamitous and happy events supposed to have been prophesied by them. Such records have been preserved in the twenty-four Dynastic Histories, in special chapters, in addition to numerous notices recorded in other places. Those chapters are mostly entitled "records concerning the five elements." In fact, the earliest classification of phenomena was according to fire, water, earth, wood, and metal,—the five components of the Universe. Those chapters contain

also in many cases the interpretations of the phenomena, as also the events which they foretokened. Such interpretations were obtained by the manipulation of many factors, the principal of which the reader already knows. The five elements correspond with the seasons, and with the southern, northern, central, eastern, and western divisions of the world (page 169). The natural divisions of time and the cardinal points are denominated by the ten "stems" and the twelve "branches," and by the binominals formed by combination of the same (page 235). It was, accordingly, always possible to study the phenomena in connection with time and place. Besides, interpreters might always draw from the wisdom of earlier times, found in hundreds of writings, among which the Classics and other ancient books, especially the *Tso ch 'wen*, stood pre-eminent; and they had in hand, furthermore, the long records of phenomena, and their interpretations made by the official diviners of preceding dynasties. Many of these writings are still preserved, though not always in a complete state. We need not again emphasise the fact that in China traditional wisdom, especially if it is written, is received as author-

itative truth, because it is a legacy from the ancestors, who are national gods.

The irregularities or derangements in the Universe are classified by the Chinese according to the parts of Heaven and Earth in which they are produced.

The first class contains the *t 'ien pien*, "deviations in the sky," such as strange colours or sudden changes of colour, clouds bursting open, displaying armies or blood-coloured streams of light; dense clouds, covering the sky everywhere, without shedding a drop of rain; voices resounding in the air, etc. *Jihi*, "solar deviations," and *yueh*, "lunar deviations," were always noted with peculiar care: for example, spots, protuberances, halos and their colours, strange colorations round these luminaries, parhelia. The most important deviations were eclipses; and it is to their high significance, as tokens of the Tao of the Universe, that we are indebted for the fact that so many have been recorded in ancient books, especially in the *Tso ch 'wen* and the *Shu king*. They are recorded by hundreds in the standard histories. According to the present imperial statutes for the *Khin t 'ien kien*, this Institute must inform the throne

about all coming eclipses, and carefully observe them, in order to draw prognostics.

The observation of the *sing pien*, "deviations of the stars and planets," represents what we call astrology, the main and most extensive branch of the official system of divination of nature up to the present time. Its cultivation is imperatively imposed upon government also by the holy *Yih king*, which says: "Heaven hangs out its figures, which announce felicity or evil, and holy men shall conform their actions with them."[1] Such a holy man the ruling Son of Heaven always is; and it is, accordingly, for Confucian reasons that the *Khin thien kien* of this dynasty has a special *t'ien wen kho*, "Bureau for the figures of Heaven."

Astrology embraces observation of the changes in the aspect and brightness of the stars and planets, their conjunctions with the sun and the moon, and their position at eclipses; further, the musical tunes and other sounds said to be emitted by stars and planets; the visibility of Venus in the daytime, and so on. The names of stars and

[1] Appendix *Hi-ts'zĕ*, I.

constellations (many of which may be as old as the days of Babylon and Egypt) indicated, even as early as the classical age, the influences of those luminaries on the business of man and his government, as also calamities, diseases, etc. Moreover, each subdivision of the territory of the Son of Heaven was placed under the rule of a part of the starry sky, in accordance with a system, called *fen yé*, "allotment to the celestial fields." Astrological factors of especial importance were twenty-five principal constellations, called *siu*, and the conjunctions or so-called "collisions" of planets with these and other asterisms. Highly important for official astrology was, of course, the zone around the pole, the stars in which represent the emperor and his court, his residence and ministers. And last, but not least, the so-called "flowing stars," or comets, their movements through the stars, and their conjunctions with the planets were celestial signs of great significance; so also were "falling stars," "falling stones," and "star rains" or meteoric showers. The official Standard Histories devote, as a rule, special chapters to these phenomena.

Observation of winds, clouds, rain, thunder

and lightning was ever a state affair of the highest order. The statutes for the *Khin t'ien kien* prescribe that this Institute shall, at the beginning and in the middle of each of the four solar seasons, perform divination rites with regard to the winds, and that it shall divine about thunder as soon as the first clap is heard in the spring. Winds were observed with peculiar attention, because clouds and rain, but for which the human race cannot produce food and live, are dominated by the monsoons or periodical winds. It has ever been a Universistic law, announced by the *Li ki* in its "Book on Music" (page 112), that "it is in accordance with the Tao of Heaven and Earth that famine shall prevail if winds and rains do not come at their proper periods." The augural study of wind and rain is most closely connected with astrology, since it has been declared by the book *Hung fan* of the *Shu king* (page 250)

> "that the people must examine the stars, because there are among these some which have a good influence upon the winds, and some which further rainfall, and because the course of the moon among the stars produces wind and rain."

It is an explicit statement of the *Cheu li* that, during the Cheu dynasty (12th–3d century B.C.), the observation of clouds, rain, drought, abundance, and dearth, and of the winds, with respect to harmony between Heaven and Earth, producing either peace or rebellion, was a function of the court astrologers.

Chinese philosophy, ancient and modern, teaches that wind is the breath of the Universe, a mixture of Yang and Yin, containing more Yang in summer, and more Yin in winter; accordingly it is in a measure the Tao itself, so that its irregularities must be supremely significant. Owing to this theory, an enormous amount of meteorologic wisdom has been gathered for the sake of the human race, principally tending to predict, from the direction and strength of the wind on each day of the year, its direction on coming days, and consequently the chances of rainfall or sunshine, floods or harvests. Assertions of wise men of former days, set forth for a great part in books, have continuously propped this science. This science teaches that the winds derive their characters from the parts of the Universe whence they blow. As a consequence, they have the character-

istics of the human passions, because these are assimilated with the north, south, east, and west.[1] It is, therefore, possible to foretell from the wind what human passions will predominate, and what corresponding event shall therefrom result, such as rebellions [produced by anger], general panics and migrations of people [which are fruits of fear], and so on. Prognostics may also be drawn from winds by carefully determining their musical tones, because human wisdom discovered long ago that every day of the calendar is influenced by one of the five notes of the gamut.

In the army, astromancy is extensively practised as a very useful art. By a judicious use of the statements of ancient and modern sages it may be discovered from the winds and their directions whether an enemy is an overmatch, or from which side he will begin the attack, or whether it is advisable to offer battle or to retreat. Whirlwinds are subjects of special observations, studies, and theories. Gales and typhoons are recorded in the Standard Histories in great abundance.

Not less numerous are the recorded cases of excessive rainfall, destroying crops and causing

[1] *Cf.* the table on p. 169.

floods, which were averted or not averted by means of special sacrifices instituted by the State Religion. Timely rainfall, indispensable for the production of food, generally proved that the Order of the World is in a sound and proper condition; accordingly, it forebodes happiness. Yet rains may sometimes be the tears which Heaven weeps because great evil is imminent. Certain rainy or rainless days, especially when the sun is in conjunction with stars which control rain, are sure to predict rain or sunshine on other days. Rain is foreboded also by clouds of certain shapes in the proximity of such stars. But evil is always in store if it rains other things than water; reconcilement or reparation of the Tao of the Universe and Man, by means of measures which we have mentioned, is then urgent. According to the authentic official Standard Histories, there is hardly anything which the Heavens have not rained in China. They have sent down clay, mud, stones, sand, ashes, birds, fishes, tortoises, insects, men, blood, hairs, feathers, bones, flesh and grease, red snow, quicksilver, coins, gold, silver, and iron, foil, silk and cotton, ink, paper, shrubs, leaves, flowers, corn, beans, weapons, and caldrons.

China is a country of great and numerous wonders.

Clouds, because of their endless variety of forms and colours, have always been excellent signs of the condition of nature. When they suddenly appear near stars which rule the conditions of human life, they may be either favourable or unfavourable signs; they are highly significant also when they appear near the sun or moon, or in the shape of halos. Even such important events as the rise of adventurers to imperial dignity have been announced by clouds. Their drifting against the wind, or their immobility at windy times, or their movements generally, prognosticate coming weather and events. For prognostications of this kind careful attention was paid also to fogs of various colours, and to dew appearing at dawn and sunset. No dew was so propitious as "sweet dew" or "celestial wine," that is, honey-dew. It always announced luxurious growth and abundance resulting in prolongation of human life; no wonder then that it is mentioned with peculiar frequency in the books of history.

Rainbows, being, like the winds, composed of Yang and Yin, were naturally considered to be

excellent means of investigating the Tao and its derangements. Their colours and the times of their appearances were observed, and simultaneous conditions of the stars and planets studied. In dry times they foreboded rain, in rainy times, clear weather. Pale rainbows were always unfavourable omens.

Thunder, the herald of rain, is always a propitious phenomenon; but if, under certain circumstances, it brings no rain, it may forebode evil. For this reason it is taken notice of especially in winter, the rainless season. Lightning, which strikes men or objects, always betokens evil, even great calamities, such as attacks by rebels or enemies acting as instruments of the rage of Heaven. Should lightning strike a city gate, it betokens disloyal officers, dislocating the Tao of Man by secretly plotting sedition and insurrection. And if the ancestral temple of the dynasty is struck by the fire of Heaven, the emperor shall be dethroned and his house destroyed.

Hail is produced when the Yang and the Yin collide. It is, therefore, always inauspicious. The evil which it predicts differs according to the seasons in which it falls; it is inconsiderable in win-

ter. Its effect upon roof tiles, vegetation crops, tame birds and cattle, supplies man with numerous factors from which coming evil may be calculated. If it falls thick as snow, it is particularly ominous for the government, being in this case a sign that ministers are plotting regicide.

Important derangements of the Tao, which always demand attention and reparation, are untimely waves of cold and heat, destructively affecting vegetation and harvests. They may even bring disease and plague; indeed the classical "Book on Music" explicitly declares: "It is in accordance with the Tao of Heaven and Earth that disease shall prevail when cold and warm weather do not come in due time." Measures of reconcilement and reparation were taken with the greatest zeal and devotion when such plagues were really rife. The same was the case whenever conflagrations, breaking out in a mysterious way in the palace or in some temple of the State Religion, indicated that the punishing hand of Heaven was laid on the dynasty.

The same careful attention which the Universistic government of China has, in all times, paid to the premonitions of Heaven, it could not reason-

ably refuse to those of the Earth, the other great half of the world.

Extraordinary terrestrial phenomena, interpreted as derangements of the Tao, have been officially observed and recorded in China by thousands. Observers and interpreters started from the principle that any motion in the ground portended evil, since the normal nature of Earth is stability. Earthquakes signified that the respect of the ministers for the ruler was gone, so that rebellion was imminent, with war, bloodshed, arson, destruction of crops, famine, plague, and other evils, nay, even dethronement of the Son of Heaven. Their significance was, however, modified by the times in which they occurred, as also by the character of the buildings which they destroyed, and other circumstances. Since elevations of the ground are the emblems of the high state-servants, landslides indicated their disloyalty. But since mountains represent the emperor also, landslides may betoken a collapse of his Tao, so that, but for a most earnest revision and reparation of his private and official conduct, a revolution in his states and the subversion of his throne cannot be escaped. Disloyalty of the ministers is revealed

also by the Universe whenever any mountain emits a strange glare. And if the ground bursts, or vomits fire, water, or blood; or when some rock spontaneously rises out of the ground, or moves from its place, or assumes the shape of a man, quadruped, or bird, or speaks human language; or when the thunder resounds from a cave—then, rebellion, revolution, and other political dangers are seriously threatening the world.

The Earth represents the female half of the Universe. Hence, should it emit loud sounds, a powerful stir of feminism is imminent, even mastership of the harem in the imperial court, so that measures of repression are urgent. Subterranean voices are peculiarly to be feared if they come forth from graves; and very terrific also are tombs that move, or trees, growing on graves, that die without apparent cause; and so are lines and spots which appear on rocks, should wise and learned men, called upon to decipher them, declare them to be admonitions in mysterious current handwriting.

If water is reported to behave in uncommon ways, the case must be officially treated in most serious fashion. A large stream, like the Hwangho

or the Yangtsze-kiang, will naturally never cease to flow; but if it does, a stagnation in the machinery of government is impending—the fruit of ill-will in the mandarinate. Inundations, thousands of which have been reported, recorded, and interpreted during the long existence of the empire, signify rebellion; or, since water belongs to the Yin, they indicate preponderance of the weaker sex, endangering the destiny of the ruling emperor, as well as the correct and happy condition of domestic life among the people. A brook or well, suddenly drying up in a mysterious way indicates that the people in the locality will have to emigrate for want of water, or to become vagrants, or that they will be driven away by force of arms. Particular ill-omens also are changes in the colour of water, especially if it becomes red as blood, or so foul that the fish die. But should it lose its turbidity and become limpid, the prognostication is always favourable. A spring that suddenly gurgles and bubbles with extraordinary vehemence indicates that officials of the lowest ranks will receive quick promotion; and strange things perceived in water are interpreted in all ways and manners.

The third place in the constitution of the Universe is occupied by man, who is animated by its dual soul (the Yang and the Yin), as well as all other visible beings in Heaven and on Earth. Derangements in the Order of the World and the Tao of Man may therefore manifest themselves by strange phenomena in his life. In the Standard Histories, records of these phenomena fill many pages. They afford curious reading. They mention cases of sudden change of sex, foretelling that a woman will take in hand the reins of government, or that somebody of low descent will mount the throne. They inform us of cases of monstrous births, in every variety, foreboding misfortunes of a hundred kinds, according to the shape of the monster; for instance, hermaphrodites; shapeless lumps of flesh; a hundred babies, of the size of a finger, produced at one birth; tortoises, snakes, or other beasts; two or three different animals born together; or one child with one or two animals. Not seldom there have been three or four children at a birth, and some such thing has occurred to one and the same mother four times successively. Children or animals have found their way out of the wombs of women through the navel, the flank,

the breast, the head, or through an ulcer. Unborn children have cried within the womb, or have spoken intelligible language immediately after birth. Women have changed themselves into tortoises or crocodiles, men into donkeys, snakes, pigs, or carnivorous animals, either partly, or completely. Very young children have, quite of their own accord, mounted city walls to beat alarm drums, thus announcing invasions of rebels or bloodthirsty enemies. Headless corpses have loudly spoken prophetic words. Insane persons have uttered correct predictions, and have not seldom been killed immediately after having done so, lest their ominous words should be fulfilled. There have been numerous cases of horns growing out of human heads, and of whiskers growing on young women's faces. Husbands have devoured their wives, and wives their husbands. Children have suddenly grown up to an extraordinary size, even to a gigantic stature. Giants and their footprints have appeared and disappeared mysteriously. Revival of the dead has been of common occurrence, even after they had been buried many years; such resurrections presaged plagues, devastating wars, etc.

In this systematic observing and interpreting of freaks of human nature, a large place has been occupied, in all historical times, by spontaneous utterances heard in streets and markets or elsewhere, and carefully reported to the magistrates as oracles. Such revelations of human nature were particularly studied and interpreted if they came from the mouths of children, no doubt because in such cases they could hardly be suspected to be products of cunning premeditation; and as we find them mostly denoted by the term "sayings of boys," the suggestion is allowable that those of boys were of superior value, the male sex being assimilated with the Yang, and accordingly animated with more divine *shen* substance than the female. This method of soothsaying is very old. A case is mentioned by Szĕ-ma Ts'ien from the reign of king Yiu, in the eighth century B.C., and many are recorded in all the Standard Histories and various other books.

Derangements of the Tao may, of course, also manifest themselves by strange phenomena and occurrences in the world of animals and plants, which are also animated parts of the Universe. As early as the classical age, certain rare birds of

great beauty, called *fung hwang*, and strange quadrupeds, named *ki lin*, sometimes appeared as harbingers of good fortune, and, according to reports duly recorded in the Standard Histories, they did so also hundreds of times in historical ages. *Ki lin*, especially white specimens, have even been captured from time to time. Dragons, the emblems of clouds and rains, and therefore also the symbols of the imperial dignity and its benignant influence, have risen many times from large rivers to foretoken great prosperity for the Son of Heaven and his government and people. But these worthy animals are too august, too majestic to show themselves ordinarily to the profane eyes of man. Therefore, if they do show themselves, leaving their palatial mansion in the celestial spheres, there evidently is some derangement in the Tao, corresponding to a dislocation of the Tao of the emperor, caused, for example, by the fact that he does not reign correctly in accordance with the seasons. Each of the five large divisions of the Universe has its special dragons, blue, red, white, black, or yellow, respectively, like the east, south, west, north, or the centre. Therefore the colour of every dragon which is seen in the sky must be carefully reported,

to enable interpreters to explain the case in connection with various Universistic factors allied with the five divisions of the world (see the table on page 169). Under normal conditions, no dragons should ever be seen. Should a dragon be discovered in a well, for instance, in the shape of a lizard or chameleon, it is evident that imperial virtue and blessing are in straits because officers are plotting; and if a dead dragon is found somewhere, then the Son of Heaven will either die, or be replaced on the throne by another.

Official zoömancy and orniscopy have, of course, always consisted principally in observation and study of aberrations of animals from their common habits and shapes. Birds portended evil by their curious flight and voice, or by their migration or breeding at unusual times and in unusual ways, or by nesting in extraordinary places, or by burning their own nests; furthermore, by uncommon colouring of their feathers, by their metamorphosis into other birds, etc. Fowls were observed with peculiar attention. By changing into cocks or crowing hens they foretold that the emperor would be defeated, or that empresses or empress-dowagers would soon wield supreme power. If a hen had a

third leg, this imported that the ruler was reigning under female influence, so that great misfortune was imminent; and serious consequences were also to be expected if cocks had horns, or spoke in human speech, or laid eggs.

Prognostications were drawn from large and curious fishes or tortoises captured or seen in the water or in the air, or falling down from the sky in considerable numbers. In all periods reports have been recorded of serpents with six legs or strangely coloured skins; of snakes which glided into the palace or into ordinary dwelling-houses, as signs of the approach of murderous soldiery or armed rebels; of strange-looking animals of every description; six-footed mammals; horses with horns or long, fleshy, hairy, tails; foxes with nine tails; white tigers, white stags, white rats or mice. There have been frequent reports of the appearance or capture of white rabbits (mostly considered as harbingers of good fortune), of swallows and finches, blue or white crows and magpies, ravens with three or four legs, and double-headed birds. Occasionally, the strange animals were sent up along with the reports. Further, ferocious beasts have entered cities as heralds of the Order

of the Universe, and by howling in the streets or upon the walls have announced something which (the date and other factors properly considered) presaged the depopulation or ruin of the city, or some other great evil. Troops of wolves have destroyed many lives in order to signalise the total absence of Tao from the imperial government. Foxes have announced the ruin of emperors by running into their palaces, or into their private sleeping-rooms. Domestic animals have given birth to monsters of every description; mares have produced twins, stones, and men, and stallions colts. Cows have spoken like human beings; they have copulated with horses, producing monsters or twins, or unicorns. Dogs have copulated with pigs, nay, with women. Swine have given birth to elephants. But the details are endless. Prognostications have been based on insects, flies, and crickets, and on bees, swarms of which were considered ominous, especially in time of warfare. Admonitions have been supplied in large numbers by trees and shrubs growing into or towards each other in curious ways, or producing strange flowers or fruits, or flowers and fruits of other plants. They have been supplied by

withered, dry, or rotten trunks which covered themselves with foliage or flowers; from fallen trees rising up spontaneously; from trees and shrubs producing leaves and blossoms in winter, or crying, howling, or bleeding. The list is endless, since there is nothing in China in which the living soul of the Universe does not dwell.

Is it a wonder then that in this land bells and drums, touched by nobody, have of their own accord often emitted sounds that predicted an onset of enemies and insurgents, or other terrible events? Is it astonishing that noises, produced by gates and doors in the palace of the Son of Heaven, have been carefully noted, recorded, and interpreted as forecasts of sedition or some other great evil in the imperial family? Is it strange that careful attention has been generally given to spontaneous sounds of pans, dishes, pots, utensils, or, in the military camps, to sounds of weapons, generally interpreted as prognostics of defeat or other military discomfiture? Belief has never been refused to reports of miracles connected with images of gods or buddhas that move, sigh, weep, or sweat water or blood, or even cast off their heads. Such visible premonitions very likely

occurred more frequently even than apparitions of gods or immortals as messengers from the Universe pronouncing warnings and oracles. Mysterious howlings or pipings, ascribed to devils, have, of course, at all times signified coming evil.

Belief in the animation of everything in the world has been utilised on a large scale by the Chinese of every age to consult spirits on all sorts of human business, even on affairs of State of the highest importance, in order to ascertain beforehand whether they would bring good fortune or not. This has been the practice of emperors, ministers, and officers, as well as of the common people. Gods of all kinds have been interrogated either verbally, or by means of written letters, which, being burned, were received and read by them and answered in various ways. They give their answers by mediums, male or female, called *wu* and *hih*,—a numerous class, the existence of which is mentioned in the most ancient books, so that we may suppose it to have been the priesthood of China in the primeval animistic age. The gods, descending into those priests or priestesses answered through their mouths in an unintelligible language, interpreted by experts.

Or the divine answer was read from lots, believed to be drawn under direct influence of the god. Or it was obtained by means of two blocks made of a kidney-shaped piece of bamboo root, or wood, by splitting it lengthwise, so that each block had a flat and a convex side. The question having been put in such form that the spirit might confine itself to a simple "yes" or "no," the blocks were piously dropped to the ground; and if they showed the two convex sides or the two flat faces, the answer was negative, while one flat and one convex side was an affirmative answer. Gods and spirits have been consulted also on a most extensive scale by means of rods, sieves, brooms, and other objects into which they descended, and which were held in the hand or loosely suspended, thus making oracular scribblings in dust, sand, or bran, deciphered by experts.

In all known times, two divining methods have been used officially for State affairs with special predilection. Considerations that cannot be determined now led the ancient Chinese to the belief that a certain plant, called *shi*, was imbued with an extraordinary supply of *shen* substance, and, therefore, peculiarly suited to divination. A

number of its stalks, some entire, some broken, were so manipulated as to give combinations, called *kwa*, which were then interpreted by means of oracular sentences contained in the *Yih king*, and, probably, in some other books which are lost. The *Yih king* is indeed a special book of Universistic divination, more holy and eminent than any other because it is the oldest of the kind, and has been handed down from the holy men of the classical age. Its mysticism is so sublime that Confucius himself exclaimed:

> "If several years of life were granted me, I would give fifty to the study of the *Yih*, and then I might live without any considerable errors."

The other method, frequently mentioned in the Classics, employed tortoise-shells, tortoises being intensely animated because some live so long. By scorching the shells with iron instruments, lines and spots were produced from which oracles might be read. Also oneiromancy was generally practised, because the ancients, according to old books, set great value on this art. Dreams, it was

held, were real manifestations of the human soul, being its actual experiences and adventures while wandering outside the body among spiritual beings.

We have now taken a survey of the way in which emperors in all ages have devoutly governed the empire with as much adjustment to the Universe as their science could secure. They have thus strictly obeyed a classical rescript, found in the *Li yun*, which reads as follows:

> "When the holy men make rules of life, they must make Heaven and Earth the root thereof, the Yin and the Yang (the Tao) the principle, the four seasons the handle, the sun and the stars the regulators of the times (to which the rules refer), and the moon the divider (of those times). The *kwei* and the *shen* they shall employ as servants (for the execution of those rules), the five elements as the substance thereof, the rules of social life (*li*) and righteousness as the instruments (by which they are executed), the natural character of man as the field."

Among the people, divination and soothsaying, side by side with chronomancy, rule and tyrannise

one's life in all its parts. The literature on that art is very large, and its professors may be counted by thousands. A thorough study of the political and social system of observation and divination of nature in China would exhibit the greater part of an enormous mass of religious superstition, the other part of which is furnished by her demonology and exorcising magic, which, as I have demonstrated, is likewise thoroughly Universistic. Such study would open to us an inexhaustible mine of information, suited to make the mouths of folklorists and ethnologists water. This system is the only one now existing in the world as a complete science, based on foundations that were laid in the darkest night of human history, when Babylonians and Egyptians were erecting their systems of wisdom upon the Universistic base. Their systems, lost for so long time, modern science is now reconstructing piecemeal as a relic of ancient culture and thought. Is it improbable that a thorough study of the Chinese system, which has never died out, may facilitate the explanation of old Babylonian and Egyptian divinatory art and religious conceptions generally? Is it preposterous to suggest that such comparative study may lead

to the discovery of the existence, at the dawn of human history, of one common root of religious development in Asia, namely, man's consciousness of the power of the Universe, and the necessity of avoiding its evil influences? I earnestly commend this question to students of ancient Western Asia and students of China.

CHAPTER VIII

FUNG SHUI

NO branch of the science and art which Universism has created in East Asia to secure the existence and the happiness of the human race, can, as regards influence on human life and action, compare with *fung shui*. This term is not unknown among foreigners, since treatises have been written by sinologists on the subject which it represents. *Fung shui* may be defined as the science and art which tends to realise the ideal aim that every dwelling-place of man, his ancestors and his gods, together with his village or town, fields and surrounding region, must be situated and constructed in such a manner that the Universe can exercise as completely as possible its favourable influences upon it.

That man in Universistic China ought to *dwell* under the beneficent influences of Heaven and Earth, is manifest. It is also quite intelligible

that this ought to be the case with his ancestors; that is to say, the house altars and temples, where their soul-tablets are kept and worshipped, and the graves in which their souls abide must be placed under favourable natural influences, because those souls are patron divinities, unable to dispense any felicity unless they are themselves in possession of a surplus thereof, which nothing but the Universe can bestow. The same principle, for quite the same reason, controls the construction of altars and temples of the gods. Should altars, graves, and temples be made in unfavourable spots, ancestors and gods will refuse to abide there, or will be irritated, the consequence being that man, unprotected, is at the mercy of the world of devils, with their evils, death, and destruction.

Fung shui, therefore, is a most important matter. It tyrannises over the Chinese nation certainly not less intensively and extensively than chronomancy, and it has done so since ancient days. It is, of course, as holy as Universism itself; it pretends to be the greatest benefactor of mankind, but in reality it is one of its scourges. *Fung shui* signifies "wind and water." In China, where the climate is dominated by monsoons blowing from

the north, cold and dry in winter and spring, and from the south, warm and wet in summer and autumn, the blessings of the Universe, represented by warmth and rains, without which no plants can grow, no food can be produced, are actually distributed by the winds. *Fung shui*, accordingly, denotes the beneficent atmospheric influences of the Universe, ruling human fate as gods or *shen*, which, as will be remembered, compose the Parnassus of the State Religion.

The science is also called *khan yu*, a term which occurs even in the literature of the Han dynasty, and is said to mean "Heaven and Earth." A very common name is *ti li*, "influences or laws of the earth," which might be translated by "geomancy." It is a classical term, borrowed from the following passage in the *Yih king*, the oldest one, according to the Chinese, that refers to the art:

> "By looking up, in order to contemplate the constellations, and by looking down to examine the influences or laws of the Earth, Man may understand the explanations of mysterious and intelligible matters."[1]

[1] *Hi-ts'ze*, I.

We may, indeed, admit, that the principles of *fung shui* are not much younger than Universism in its primary forms. During the Han dynasty the art was undoubtedly in a flourishing condition. The historical writings of Szĕ-ma Ts 'ien, written in the second century B.C., make mention of a *khan yu* school, consulted by the emperor Wu. Moreover, there is in the historical books of the Han dynasty a list of writings on divination, in which we find a "golden *khan yu* thesaurus" in fourteen chapters, besides six works "on the rules concerning forms, which treated the nine subdivisions of the empire, and derived therefrom the shape of cities and dwellings."

There are, moreover, explicit statements, in the Standard History of the Han dynasty, concerning families which attained great glory because some ancestors of theirs happened to be buried under the propitious influences of the Universe. And from that time to this day we find the art of selecting graves in the first place at the service of those who desired official posts. Investment with official dignity has, indeed, always meant in China the same thing as wealth, honour, glory, and power in this world and the next, and is also a matter of

the highest importance to the deceased ancestors, to whom the possession of a rich and thriving off-spring insures bounteous sacrifices and pious worship, and, as a consequence, wealth, glory and influence in the world of spirits. Such happy ancestors are, of course, able and willing to redouble and treble their protection. This doctrine even dominates the ruling dynasty. The duration of its existence and sway is dependent upon the *fung shui* of its three burial grounds. This *fung shui* is watched over faithfully by the *Kin thien kien*, which possesses for this purpose a staff of "students or doctors of the Yin and the Yang," who, besides, have to utilise their wisdom for the erection and restoration of all the edifices, altars, and temples of the State, and for State works generally. The *fung shui* of the imperial mausoleums is considered so highly important that the hills which gird them, and which, according to the science, control the influences of the *fung* or winds which blow there, and of the *shui* or rains which fall there and flow down as brooks, have received a place in the pantheon of the State Religion immediately after the holiest mountains of the empire (cf. page 202).

Fung shui is then inseparably connected with the construction of houses, graves, and temples. Like chronomancy, it is practised by special experts or professors who search for favourable spots for buildings and tombs, and indicate the positions and directions of their various parts. This class of men has always had sages and authors who survive by their fame and writings to the present day. Their skill has often resembled magic or witchcraft, being able to command the blessings of Heaven and Earth for whole generations. Anecdotes of their achievements are, to this hour, main pillars upholding the system as a product of this not only highly useful, but absolutely indispensable science. Under their direction tombs have been laid out which produced founders of dynasties among the owners. Emperors have felt themselves obliged to put a check on the geomantic craze created by such wonders, and to confine the art within the limits of orthodox classicism; but their efforts proved vain, and geomantic literature and the number of celebrated experts have continued to grow from age to age.

The geomantic art is principally a method of computation, in which written characters represent

celestial and terrestrial powers or influences. Those characters are in the first place the ten "stems" and the twelve "branches," which denote the divisions of time (see page 235). They are used, however, also as names for the divisions of Heaven and Earth, in accordance with the points of the compass. To this end they are arranged in a circle, with strict observance of the immutable sequence which the ancients have fixed for both categories. This circle affords a means of defining the qualities and virtues of the twenty-four divisions of the Earth, because the latter are overruled by the influence of the corresponding divisions of the celestial sphere. This sphere is divided, ever since the classical golden era, into four quarters, an eastern, southern, western, and northern, called Blue Dragon, Red Bird, White Tiger, and Black Tortoise, respectively. Each of these quarters contains seven principal stars or constellations, called *siu*, the influences of which, modified by adjacent stars and asterisms, define the qualities and virtues of the corresponding divisions of the Earth, in accordance with the great law that the Tao of Heaven overrules the Tao of Earth.

Astrology and geomancy are thus interwoven

inseparably. The qualities of the points of the compass which are denoted by the "stems" are, moreover, defined by the twelve animals to which they correspond (cf. page 246); and a large place in these speculations is, of course, assigned to the five elements, which constitute the Universe and which are assimilated with its quarters and with the five planets.[1] The use of the "stems" and "branches" as names of the divisions of the Universe connects geomancy also closely with horoscopy, since it enables the professors to test the qualities of each spot which they select for houses or graves as bearing on the fate of every person who is interested in the matter, since such fate (cf. p. 246) is determined by the four "stems" and four "branches" which denote the moment of his birth. Many other combinations may be made according to the ability of experts.

To facilitate such ingenious work they use compasses, upon which the various signs and symbols are arranged in concentric circles around the needle. These instruments contain all the wisdom of the art; they are real magical boxes, from which all the blessings of the Universe may be distributed

[1] See the table on page 169.

over the human race, if able hands manipulate them properly. They always have a circle containing the *kwa* of the *Yih king* (page 281), which denote the chief divisions of the Universe and its principal atmospheric or meteorological influences. A considerable list of definitions of the qualities of the various terrestrial divisions is procured thereby, viz., the same which that holy classic gives of the *kwa*. Finally, it must be noted that the wonderful value of the compass is greatly increased by a circle in which the names of the twenty-four solar seasons of the year are inscribed in their natural order of succession. It thus becomes also a calendar, which shows the time when building operations of any kind may be begun. Of course, these seasons are arranged in such a manner that the vernal equinox corresponds with due east, the summer solstice with due south, etc. In this wise geomancy is ingeniously combined with chronomancy; but this combination is a source of much domestic and social trouble, as it mostly forbids owners of houses and temples to repair them at the time they *need* reparation.

The influence which Heaven and its phenomena, in particular *fung shui* or "wind and rain," exercise

upon Earth, is greatly modified by the configuration of the Earth. This simple truth has given birth to the geomantic doctrine that hills may prevent noxious winds from striking buildings or tombs; and since, in this speculative science, theory is king, the utility of hills in this respect is not reduced by their distance, but is simply determined by their visibility. Bad winds may, accordingly, be controlled by rocks, however small they be, if they merely conceal from view dangerous gaps in distant mountains, or by a pile of stones, erected at a proper distance, or by shrubs or trees, etc. The influence of water is represented by rivers, brooks, lakes, ponds, and seas. Even though dry, they are perfect bearers of so-called *shui-shen* or *shui ling*, that is "aquatic divinity or animation." Windings and bends of rivers and brooks are objects of studious care; tanks and ponds are dug to attract the aquatic animation to the neighbouring places or to the temples and mausoleums built there; even the location, form, size, and direction of drains are calculated with the greatest care. Configurations of landscapes are of importance also because they contain the influences of the divisions of the sphere

to which they correspond, and because they send them forth beneficently among men. Professors divide these influences mainly into four categories, namely, those of the Blue Dragon, the Red Bird, the White Tiger, and the Black Tortoise. A perfect situation of a house, temple, or grave requires a configuration that represents those animals respectively on the eastern, southern, western, and northern sides, but they need nor bear the slightest resemblance to any animals; even a house, tomb, rock, stone, or column, tree or shrub may form a good animal. The tiger represents wind, and the dragon water, and they are therefore of peculiar importance. Families who live under the tutelage of a good dragon and tiger may be sure to produce civil and military officers, because the dragon symbolises the emperor, and the tiger intrepidity and courage. Even a dragon alone may give a good *fung shui;* but the other animals without the dragon are valueless.

Each subdivision of a favourable mountain or hill may, of course, have its special merits or demerits, according to the stars by which it is ruled; that is to say, it may have *shen* or *ling*, "animation, spirituality, or vitality," and may be able to dispense

blessings of various descriptions and in different quantities. The animation may, however, be inactive, latent, or dead, and, accordingly, useless to man. It may also be accumulated or concentrated in one place and dissolved elsewhere; it may be unalloyed or mixed, floating on the surface or hidden deep, powerful or weak, etc. It is the learning of the professors that detects all these particulars and utilises them. Hills and mountains are also very powerful in their influence upon the fate of man, if their outlines allow the imagination to distinguish in them favourable or unfavourable omens. For instance, if a hill bears on its top a boulder of great size, weighing heavily upon it, the fortunes of the people around may be crushed down, and poverty and misfortune for ever prevail among them. If, however, there is recognisable in its contour a snake, near the head of which a rock or stone suggests the idea of a pearl vomited by the snake, those who live under this *fung shui* will become rich. If one dwells under the protection of some hill on the top of which there are three small peaks side by side, his sons and grandsons will gain literary laurels by study and scholarship, and be promoted to high

offices. Therefore men of letters are accustomed to have on their writing-desk an instrument of stone or wood, cut in the shape of such peaks, between which they rest the point of their writing-brush, to prevent the ink from blotting the table. As such association of ideas with the contours of mountains may be spun out endlessly, the field for imaginative ingenuity is widened indefinitely, and experts explore it in every direction. Some books of geomancy give long lists of objects which have disastrous or beneficial effects when detected in the outlines of hills and mountains.

No configuration is perfect unless the five elements or planets work in it harmoniously.

Every intelligent Chinese understands that wherever in hills, rocks, or boulders the element Fire or heat predominates, conflagrations or droughts must be common, unless it be counterbalanced by some other configuration which represents Water. If the element Earth is overruled by Water, or suffering from want of Water, inundations or droughts will be impending dangers. Should one configuration represent Fire, and another, quite near it, Wood, then houses, buildings, villages, and towns are always in danger of confla-

gration. Villages which are often harassed by armed robbers will readily be declared by good experts to be situated under the influence of some hill which represents the element Metal, or to have its graves on or near such a hill. On the other hand, there are numerous beneficial combinations of elements. Fire and Water, if united in harmony and in adequate proportions, further fecundation, and may render the fields productive, causing also the inmates of a house, or the offspring of a buried corpse, to produce a numerous progeny.

Bad elements may also produce good elements, and may suppress the influences of others which are bad. This doctrine, which allows fancy and speculation even a wider play in *fung shui* matters, is based upon the wisdom of antiquity. This has taught that Wood or vegetation overpowers Earth, and produces Fire; Earth conquers or impairs Water, and produces Metal; Water destroys or vanquishes Fire, and produces Wood or vegetation; Fire conquers Metal, and creates Earth, that is ashes; and Metal destroys Wood, and produces Water when it melts. Upon these vagaries professors of *fung shui* have built an art of regulating the operation of the five elements by

improving the natural configuration of the ground and the contours of hills, and they have carried this art to a high state of perfection. Clever professors find no difficulty in quenching, for instance, the evils emanating from a rock whose points represent flames, by having a water tank made of proper dimensions, calculated to the inch. They can also cut off such points, and thus mitigate their effects to any extent desired; or they may modify their shapes into others which represent Wood, Metal, or any elements they please; or they may turn a brook in a favourable direction, in order to quench the Fire represented by a hill or rock. Or, if a flat elevation disturbs the harmony of the configuration, they have merely to place a convex or pointed pile of stones on the top, as high and broad as they deem fit. With the object of thus correcting the *fung shui* of cities, towns, and valleys, there have been erected towers or pagodas in large numbers throughout the empire, at the cost of much money and labour. Thus may man's foresight and energy rule the influences of the Universe; and so he can turn his own destiny and fortunes, and those of his offspring, into any channel he pleases.

This philosophical nonsense about the elements intimately connects the geomantic art by another tie with the celestial sphere. For many centuries it has been customary to consider the five planets as celestial counterparts of the five elements, and to call Venus the star of Metal, and Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and Saturn the stars of Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, respectively. Conversely, every part of the terrestrial surface, when identified with one or more elements on account of its shape, is under the rule and influence of the corresponding planets, and also under that of the stars and constellations through which they move.

Carefully and cautiously, geomancers, when seeking for a suitable place for a house, temple, or grave, try to discover the elements which are hidden in the configurations. Stony ground, barren rocks, and boulders not cemented together by loam or clay in considerable quantities, embody the element Fire, as the capricious outlines resemble notched flames, and the dryness of the stones and rocks is a proof of plutonic propensities. A coffin imbedded in such ground would quickly moulder and not long afford a shelter to the corpse and the soul; it would be a *fung shui* as bad as that

of a watery soil. Likewise, any mountain, bluff, or knoll rising up like a peak represents the element Fire. If the top is gently rounded, Metal predominates in it. If it rises up steep, bold, and straight, it is declared to represent Wood, probably because it reminds one of a tree. Should the top form a terrace of clay or earth, the element Earth predominates; and if it has an irregular surface, reminding experts of a lake or river, it passes for an embodiment of the watery element. Of course, any eminence may combine in itself two or more of these elementary forms, and thus represent just so many elements. It may be that one professor sees Fire where another discerns Water or Metal; but this is no drawback, because they can thus perpetually confute each other's statements in the interest of customers and their own purse.

And yet such playing with contours and lines is considered to be high wisdom, taught for many ages by a predominant school of *fung shui*, commonly called the Kiangsi school, because its great man was the imperial geomancer, Yang Yun-sung, who lived in that province in the ninth century. This school also laid a peculiar stress upon the influences of directions and meanderings of water-

courses, or, in other words, upon those of Dragons, which imaginary animals play parts in this system under various names and aspects. The predominance of the Kiangsi school may be ascribed in the main to the circumstance that it has enabled any charlatan to point out at his pleasure dragons, tigers, elements, water-spirits, etc., and take rank as a coryphæus with a large practice. It also opens the way to uneducated people to perfect themselves in *fung shui* wisdom and to chatter about configurations and outlines with perfect self-reliance; and when there is an altercation about imaginary injuries done to the *fung shui* of a grave or house, old matrons are generally loudest in expressing opinions.

The fact that *fung shui* wisdom is within so easy reach does not cast any shadow upon the reputation of its professors as marvels of learning, fathoming the mysteries of Heaven and Earth. For, after all, they possess more of that wisdom than the rest of mankind, so that there always is a chance that the spots which they assign for graves or dwellings may either secure the prosperity of their employers, even for generations, or plunge them into woe or poverty. Professors may main-

tain their reputation in many ways. By means of high-sounding names of ancient sages and scholars, the bearers of whose wisdom they pretend to be, they will overawe their customers. By various tales and anecdotes, which occur abundantly even in the Standard Histories, they will intimidate them, and prove how useful and prudent it is to cultivate their good-will. The mysterious compass; the dignified and imposing airs with which they manipulate it when they roam over the hills with the customers, to point out, with display of great sharpness of sight and wit, dragons, tigers, and conjunctions of all sorts and descriptions; their learned jargon, etc.—by all these means they command general respect, and open purses. The longer the professor delays his decisions, the larger his pay. And if his decisions do not secure prosperity, or if, on the contrary, they bring decay of fortunes, well, then, not he but Almighty Heaven is to be blamed. In fact, according to holy, classical doctrine, Heaven grants no felicity except to the good (cf. page 21); and it is in the case in question evident that the employers or their ancestry were not virtuous enough to deserve its blessing. *Fung shui* is no creator of happiness,

but merely a medium or agent for the distribution of that which Heaven, and Heaven alone, bestows. It is now also clear why so very few *fung shui* professors become rich and honourable by means of the excellent graves which, of course, they are sure to select for their own parents. This fact creates suspicion and scepticism with regard to their art. The scepticism is even nurtured by authors, many of whom disparage *fung shui* most because it prevents so many people from burying their parents in due time.

Indeed, the first cause of such impious, sinful delay is the professor, who, having to find a proper site for the grave, delays his decision, in order to extort pay, presents, and bounties. Then, when he has finished this task, many days are lost in bargaining, through a broker or agent, with the owner of the ground, who, of course, demands an exorbitant price, allowing the family first to test the geomantic qualities of the soil, binding himself also, in consideration of earnest money, not to sell the spot to anybody else, until they decline the purchase. Without delay, a small quantity of pig's bones are bought at the butcher's and interred on the spot in a small box of wood. After about a

year, the family exhume and examine them. If they are now hard, dry, and white, the soil is approved, showing that it possesses sufficient preservative power to keep the osseous remains of the dead in a good condition and, consequently, to attach his manes for ever to the spot. It is then by no means rare that the family resolves to consult another professor, in order to verify the decisions of the first. As a rule, this new marvel with a flow of critical remarks condemns everything which his colleague did, for the professors by no means constitute a mutual admiration society. Now everything has to be done again from the beginning. The earnest money is lost; the payments made to the professor cannot be recovered; the dinner parties, by which the family has bought the good-will of the dangerous man, are a dead loss; and the new oracle in his turn puts the family to expense. He borrows money from them whenever an opportunity presents itself, claims payment for every trifle of work, and is likely to intrigue with the proprietor of each plot of ground which he declares to answer the purposes of the family. In short, there is probably not much exaggeration in the assertion of the Chinese

that many well-to-do families, unable to restrain their passion for *fung shui*, are brought to the brink of poverty by geomancers.

Pending the discovery of the auspicious grave desired, the deceased parent remains unburied, either at home, or somewhere else. Although public opinion decries long postponement of burial as the height of unfilialness, and government threatens it with severe punishment, yet regularly every year thousands of dead are deprived of a timely burial because of the exigencies of *fung shui*.

It is, of course, an inconvenient matter to keep a corpse at home for a long time, even though the coffin is hermetically closed and lacquered. Moreover, many Chinese believe that it may bring evil on the house. It is, therefore, common to deposit it somewhere in a cottage, built or hired to this end in the country, or in a Buddhist temple; the consequence being that in many parts of China the soil is, as it were, studded with corpses awaiting interment. In Canton, and certainly in many other places, there even exist large buildings, capable of holding several hundred coffins, each in a separate apartment, for which the family has to pay rent.

In seeking a grave, much time is lost especially when the dead man leaves many children. The eight *kwa* which, as we have seen, play an important part in geomantic determinations, are identified by the *Yih king* with sons and daughters. Consequently, the fortunes of all the members of a family cannot be insured by the grave of their father or mother unless the forms of the surroundings are perfect on all sides; and as such a perfect grave is hardly ever obtainable, it follows that some of the children are excluded from the benefits yielded by the grave. As a consequence, discord arises, especially when the children thus set aside are the offspring of a jealous second wife or of concubines, and these women instigate the dear fruits of their wombs not to stoop to such a wrong, but to oppose it vigorously to the end.

This truth, that a grave can seldom dispense blessings to all the sons equally, is one of the greatest discoveries of the *fung shui* science. It explains why one brother may become wealthy and great, while the other remains poor and humble. The theory is undisputed, as many tales, even many pages of the Standard Histories confirm it. It shows that, under the sway of Uni-

versism, the possession of sons and money is even in China not an unalloyed blessing, as it may become fatal after death. The evil may be avoided by any one who has his own grave made while he lives. But they who have recourse to this expedient are rare. It is obvious that the geomancers employed in such a case have the best possible opportunity to procrastinate for months and even years; and as the family has plenty of time to consult any number of them, there is no limit to the expenditure. It is impossible to make sure that, as soon as the old man is dead, no wiser professor will turn up, to convince the sons that the *fung shui* of the grave is not worth a farthing. They will then delay the burial, or provisionally bury the coffin somewhere at haphazard, to rebury it as soon as the good grave is found, unless in the meantime the family prospers sufficiently to feel convinced that the *fung shui* of the provisional grave is excellent, and that any removal of the coffin therefrom would be senseless.

The *fung shui* of a grave, house, or temple is a fragile combination of imaginary influences of nature, fitting into one another and acting upon one another like the different parts of a machine,

the slightest defect in which may bring the whole to a standstill. As it is so delicate, no man, however thrifty or avaricious, can dispense with the guidance of experts; and as it is so easily disturbed, experts always have at hand a ready excuse when their prophecies are not realised. The *fung shui*, they say in such cases, was perfect at the outset, but it has been wounded or killed by some accident, or by some malicious act of a bad neighbour.

Fung shui may be wounded by a mere trifle. A stone carelessly thrown away, or set up by a person to improve the *fung shui* of a grave of his; the erection of a boundary mark; the building of a hut or shed at some distance from the grave or on a visible mountain; in short, anything may prove fatal. But nothing is so perilous for a grave as the construction of another grave in the adjacent grounds. In general it is the professor who opens the eyes of the family to the sorrowful fact that the new grave intercepts the influences of a watercourse, or that it cuts off the spiritual operation of the good influences of the tail or leg of the Dragon or Tiger; and he convinces the family that it is only by prompt and peremptory measures that the wound can be healed—else the beneficent

Animal will bleed to death, and the *fung shui* will be for ever destroyed

In such a case, negotiations are opened with the owners of the murderous grave, but, of course, without any good result, as they zealously stick to their right of retaining the spot which they obtained at the cost of much science and money. Geomantic measures, good for both parties, are hardly possible, for what is good for the one grave is generally pernicious to the other, and the learned combinations of factors, to which both must answer, almost inevitably collide. Hard coin may perhaps lead to a better result; but the demands of the other party are excessively high, especially if any of them are literary graduates or rich and influential men, who feel sure of gaining their cause if the offended party should invoke the intervention of the mandarins. Nothing then remains for the family but to beat a retreat. But should the two parties possess an equal amount of influence, or no influence at all, a complaint is soon lodged. Then, as is the case in every lawsuit, an opportunity is afforded to Yamen officials, policemen, and constables to make money in an easy way. By leaving the accusation untouched,

they compel the plaintiff, who is anxious to save his *fung shui* from impending death, to pay them bounties. Meanwhile, the defendant, in constant fear of the prison which may open before him any day, has to pay them more than once, nay over and over again, and yet he may even thereby not evade the dungeon, the tribunal, and torture. And so the two parties may have sunk almost all their money before the mandarin gives his verdict, occasionally after a personal visit to the spot at the cost of the plaintiff.

It is also *fung shui* that opens the way to all sorts of machinations of brokers in grave grounds. Quarrels, even fights between villages may follow, and animosity may rise to so high a pitch that graves are attacked with hoes, and even opened and desecrated. Revenge creates feuds, entailing the desecration of several more graves, open fights, incendiarism, and destruction of crops. Men, women, and children are waylaid, kidnapped, and maltreated, or held as hostages, either to be redeemed for money or exchanged; in short, civil war is rife, with all its disastrous consequences.

When matters have reached this pitch, the mandarins sometimes resort to rigorous measures.

Soldiers are stationed in both villages, who soon restore order by extorting money and food from the inhabitants so mercilessly that in the end the last bushel of rice and the last handful of coppers are gone. Meanwhile the magistrate paternally corrects those who are pointed out as actual desecrators of the graves, by making a liberal use of sticks long and short, and punishing some with the utmost rigour of the law.

Not seldom there arise hostilities between clans and villages from a derangement of the *fung shui* of an extensive region. A slight modification made in the course of a brook for irrigation or other purposes; the alteration of the outline of a hill or rock by the erection of a house or shed; in short, any trifle may seriously disturb the *fung shui* of villages or valleys, which is usually evinced by a decadence of prosperity, bad crops, and other calamities. Attacks on the *fung shui* of a landscape are not seldom made for malignant purposes. There are instances of the whole male population of a village having toiled for several days to destroy the good fortune of another settlement by digging away a knoll, levelling down an eminence, or amputating a limb from a Dragon or Tiger.

Quarrels and litigations arising from *fung shui* are of daily occurrence in cities. The repairing of a house, the building of a wall, especially if it overtops the surroundings, the planting of a pole or cutting down of a tree; in general any change in the ordinary position of objects may disturb the *fung shui* of houses and temples, and cause the city to be visited by disasters, misery, and death. Should any one suddenly fall ill or die, his family are immediately at hand to impute the blame to somebody who has ventured to make a change in the established order of things, or has made an improvement in his own property, which he had a perfect right to do. Instances are by no means rare of the mob having stormed such a person's house, demolished his furniture, assailed his person, or placed the corpse in his bed to extort money, or to introduce the influences of death into his house.

Fortunately, contention is often prevented by the fact that *fung shui*, if disturbed or injured, can be restored in various ways. Professors, if consulted in time, are generally able to suggest some remedy. When a dwelling-house is endangered, they usually order the erection of certain

fences, capable of keeping off evil that destroys the favourable influences of the spot; or they affix on the endangered place charms, composed of mysterious writing and other symbols. Also when the *fung shui* of a village, town, or city has been disturbed, there are many means to remedy the evil. Calamitous contours of houses, rocks, mountains, or plains may be rectified by skilful manipulations, and changed into instruments of blessing. If an elevation is not high enough, it can be made higher; a calamitous streamlet may be given a favourable turn; groves may be planted on the endangered side, to work as fenders; pagodas or piles of stones may be erected. A dangerous configuration which represents some animal may be deprived of its power by destroying the parts which represent its eyes or a leg. These and many other remedial procedures are employed.

Temples for the worship of tutelary divinities, and especially large Buddhist monasteries, generally owe their existence to a desire to improve the *fung shui* of a whole region. The monastery is to this end built in a spot in the mountains where the *fung shui* or "winds and water" concentrate their propitious influences, and where streamlets

are formed which irrigate the fields in the valleys. Regulators of the *fung shui* are three Buddhas, whose large images have been erected in the great church of the monastery, on an altar carefully selected by geomancers as a focus in which the propitious influences of the configurations of the hills concur, and from which, accordingly, blessings radiate over the protected region. Those three Buddhas are, as a rule, the so-called Triratna, who in the Māhayāna system represents the Universal Light; Dharma, which is in this system the Universal Law or Order; and Sangha, the host of saints. It is then in *fung shui* that Chinese Universism or Taoism mingles with Buddhist Universism.

Much more might be written about this pretended science, whose father is religious awe of the majesty and works of the divine Universe and its gods, and its mother human selfishness, desirous of utilising artificially the Universe for worldly profit. It is for this reason a hybrid monster, which destroys the mental quiet of thousands and thousands of conscientious men, tormenting them with anxious thoughts about their future and their offspring, and constraining them to impov-

erish themselves for the profit of geomancers, grave-brokers, and land-owners. It disturbs domestic peace, disseminating discord even among brothers, and animosity between families, clans, and villages. It causes the ruin of many families, wasting their means on the pretext of creating fortunes. It is an obstacle to all sorts of enterprise which might be of the greatest advantage to the people. The cutting of a new road or canal, the construction of a new bridge, a railroad, tramway, or telegraph line almost always entails the amputation of a limb or a sinew of some Dragon, Tiger, Bird, or Tortoise, or intercepts propitious æolian or aquatic influences, or interferes in some way or other with professorial calculations, causing whole wards, clans, villages, and cities to rise up as one man against the reckless individual whose enterprising spirit presumes to bring misfortune upon them all. As a consequence, *fung shui* causes an immense waste of human labour; for, by reason of the absence of good roads and practicable canals, ships, carts, and beasts of burden can be employed only in limited numbers, and this necessitates a great use of human shoulders for the transport of persons and merchandise

along paths scarcely practicable. Nor is it rare to see hundreds of ships taking a wide and difficult circuit, because *fung shui* has forbidden a bridge to be built high enough to allow of their passing underneath.

We are now in a position to define Chinese science and its various branches—*fung shui*, chronometry and chronomancy, the observation and investigation of strange phenomena in Heaven and Earth, the science of government, classical literary science, medicine. We have seen that this science is not profane but religious, an integral constituent of the all-dominating system of Universism. It is the science of the Tao of Man, that which teaches Man how to secure to his race the blessings of the living Universe, without which he cannot exist. It may represent much of the wisdom of ancient Babylonia, if not that of the whole of ancient Asia, effaced everywhere except in China, where it has expanded to its largest dimension, embracing the whole state and people. It represents the highest level to which mental culture has been able to rise in China, within the bonds of a classical orthodoxy, precluding all science of another order. The only power that

can explode it is sound science, based on an experimental and mathematical investigation of the laws of Nature. But such science is only just born in China. Should there come a time when it is seriously cultivated there, then, no doubt, a complete revolution in its religion, philosophy, ethics, literature, political institutions, and customs will take place: a process by which China must be either thoroughly disorganised and ruined, or reborn and regenerated. Then China will cease to be China and the Chinese will no longer be Chinese.

An enormous process! It has already begun its work of demolition under the influence of intercourse with foreigners. But China's civilisation is even older than our own. For some thousands of years it has outlived the most destructive storms, rising gloriously after every devastating revolution, after every change of dynasty, after every invasion of barbarians, as a phœnix from the fire. Can such a civilisation, so strong, so tenacious, so deep-rooted, be sapped without resistance? China has no second system ready to put in the place of the old system. The death of the old must, accordingly, mean total disorganisation,

anarchy, destruction—the fullest realisation, in short, of her own holy doctrine that, when Man loses the Tao, catastrophe and ruin are inevitable. Will this terrible prospect prove powerful enough to detain the nation and its government from the path of renovation? The party of conservatism no doubt has the presentiment that alteration means self-destruction; but shall this party hold its ground, and prove that the ancient Tao of the Universe and Man is indestructible? Sooner or later history will give the answer; but it seems certain that a stormy future is looming up on China's horizon. Should the Order of the World have decreed that the cruel work of demolition shall be done, and that the days of China's Universistic civilisation are numbered—then may its last day not be for that hapless ancient nation the crack of doom!

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